



DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

THE GREEK POLITICAL LANDSCAPE 2019-2021

**Dinas Elias, Eleftheriou Costas, Katsanidou
Alexia, Kordas George, Krouwel André,
Kutiyski Yordan, Lefkofridi Zoe,
Rori Lamprini, Teperoglou Eftichia**

edited by Eftichia Teperoglou
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The enduring left-right
cleavage in Greek politics



Politicization of EU-related
issues during the economic
crisis continues to have an
impact on the structure of
political competition in Greece.



Parties in Greece tend to
adopt more radical stances
than their voters.



Political elites in Greece do not
converge towards the 'median
voter' and there is a lack of
representation.

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1

INTRODUCTION: THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GREEK PARTY SYSTEM FROM 1974 TO 2019

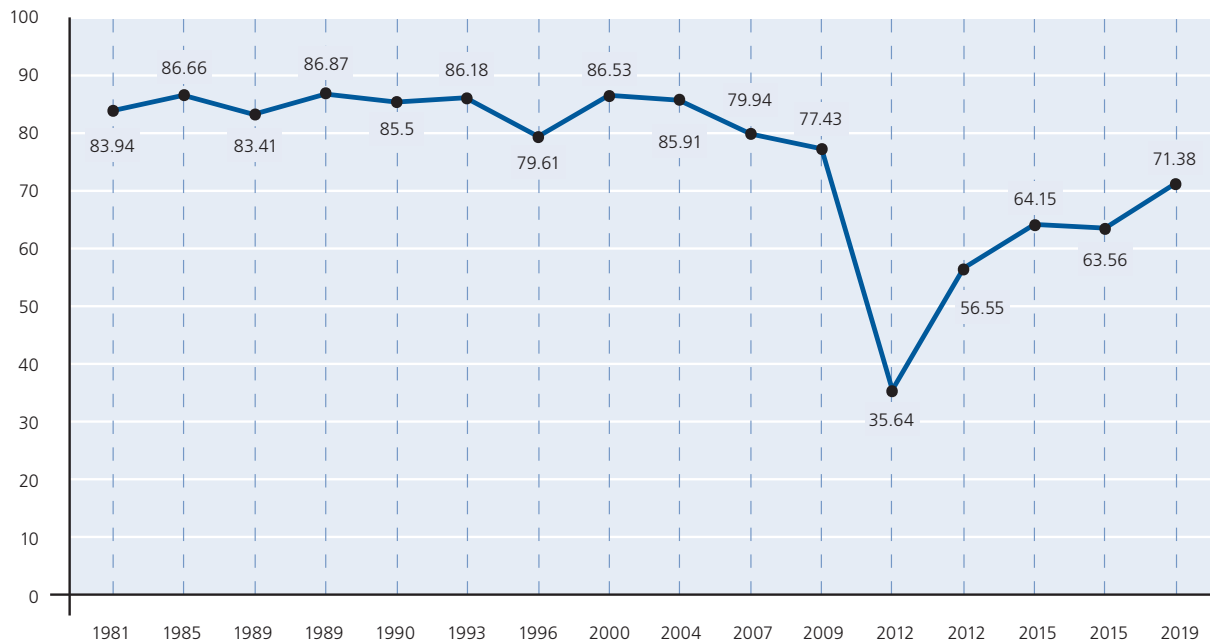
For most of the post-authoritarian era (the so-called “Third Greek Republic”), which is the period starting with the return to democracy in 1974, after the end of the seven-year dictatorship of the colonels, Greece had one of the few remaining two-party systems in Europe, similar to Britain and Malta. The long tradition of majoritarianism in Greek politics was translated in the formation of single-party majority governments and an alternation to government between the socialist party of PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement) and the conservative party of New Democracy (ND), even though PASOK was for more years the incumbent party up to the onset of the economic crisis in 2010. The brief exception to this bipolar rotation of power were the two short-lived coalition governments between June 1989 and April 1990, with the participation of the communist left in the coalition. This was caused by a shift to a pure proportional representation electoral system, which had been orchestrated by the outgoing PASOK government in order to prevent outright majorities of ND in parliament. Noteworthy is the fact that in all other parliamentary elections of the post-authoritarian period the different electoral systems adopted were not purely majoritarian ones. On the contrary, over all these years different electoral systems of “reinforced proportionality” were in effect, which produced significantly disproportional results in terms of the conversion of votes to seats. Greece’s tradition of single-party rule majoritarianism is also linked to the unbalanced relationship between the executive and the legislature. In other words, the executive dominated the legislature to a degree that was rarely seen in other European political systems (Tsatsanis and Teperoglou 2020).

The main characteristics of the political and party system from 1974 changed with the onset of the sovereign debt crisis that hit the country back in 2010. The political consequences of the crisis manifested relatively rapidly and were far reaching. The “double” earthquake elections of 2012 (May and June) in which the two-party system collapsed (e.g. PASOK and ND saw their combined vote share drop by 45 percentage points) led to the fragmentation of the Greek party system, as it is shown in **Figure 1**. From 2012 to 2019 the country experienced a period of coalition governance, namely the coalition governments between PASOK, ND and the populist right party of LAOS (2012), then the one by PASOK and ND (2012-2015) with the participation of the centre-left party of Democratic Left (for one year), and finally the

coalition between the radical left party of SYRIZA and the nationalist Independent Greeks (ANEL) party from 2015 to 2019. From the first bailout agreement signed by PASOK back in May 2010 and up to the last parliamentary elections of 2019, Greece held five parliamentary elections, two European elections, as well as a referendum over the terms of a new bailout agreement. This dense and busy political timeline was accompanied by two more bailout programs for the country. All this contributed to particularly high levels of fluidity in the political environment, upending established patterns of electoral behavior in the country. The European elections of 2019 and the snap parliamentary elections that took place a few weeks later ended the norm of coalition governments of the previous period and signaled the beginning of a return back to the traditional two-party system with ND and SYRIZA as the two main political actors/ protagonists. The latter party has replaced PASOK in this two-party system duopoly.

Another defining characteristic in this post-authoritarian period is the unidimensional structure of the ideological space around the left-right dimension. The salience of this single axis of political competition can be attributed to the historical legacy of the major political conflicts of the 20th century, which produced enduring political identities that survived well into the post-authoritarian period, namely the “Right”, the “Centre” and the “Left” (Moschonas 1995). This feature has been a main characteristic of Greek politics for most of the 20th century despite political regime changes, and even though the only party that continues to exist from the pre-authoritarian period is the KKE (Communist party) (see Tsatsanis & Teperoglou 2020). Furthermore, for the study of the Greek political landscape, it is necessary to keep in mind that -contrary to Western and Northern European countries -this unidimensional left-right space was never similar to its classic (materialistic) definition; it mostly captured a conflict over socio-political values given the late industrialization of the country and the absence of a classic labor-capital class cleavage. The period of the economic crisis saw the emergence of a new political divide that cut across the traditional left-right political dimension: the “pro-anti bailout divide”. This conflict, between those in favour of the bailout agreement and those against it, dominated the political landscape in Greece throughout the years of the economic crisis and overshadowed other political issues. Overall, the polarization along

Figure 1
The evolution of the two-party system in Greece (1981-2019)



Measured as the combined electoral strength of the two parties with the most votes at each election. For the period 1981-2012 this refers to ND and PASOK, and for the period 2012-2019 to ND and SYRIZA.

Source: Hellenic Parliament, 2022 (<https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Vouli-ton-Ellinon/To-Politevma/Ekloges/Eklogika-apotelesmata-New/#C>)

the pro- and anti-bailout camps reached its peak during the first term of the SYRIZA and ANEL coalition government. It was the period in which two challenger parties were in power and, in the first months of their term, they refused to comply with the terms of the creditors leading the country towards a very polarized referendum about the terms of the new bailout agreement. Despite the fact that the majority of Greek citizens voted against this agreement, the coalition government was forced to sign it, given that the referendum result did not increase its leverage in the negotiations against the creditors (possibly the opposite happened) (Tsatsanis, Terperoglou and Seriatos 2020).

Perhaps the only other salient issue that emerged in this period was the one related to the immigration and refugee crises. The pro-memorandum versus anti-memorandum political conflict encompassed discussions about the responsibility and blame attribution for the economic crisis. Back in 2012 the anger of Greek voters was directed against the two main parties of the "old establishment", namely PASOK and ND. Moreover, given the fact that many Greeks viewed the European Union as the main culprit for the crisis, the levels of Euroscepticism increased too. Positions in favor or against the European Union appeared to be aligned during the crisis with the pro/anti-bailout dimension. During the second term of the SYRIZA-ANEL government the Greek economy was

stabilized, with the last bailout program expiring on 20 August 2018. Especially in the period after the referendum, we can conclude that the pro/anti-bailout debate ceased to be salient given the fact that the two governmental parties – whose coalition was based on the shared rejection of the bailout agreements- implemented harsh austerity measures under a new bailout program.

The main aim of this publication is to analyze the dimensionality of the Greek political space after the 2019 parliamentary elections and in the shadow of the pandemic crisis. The findings are from the "political landscape of Greece 2019-2021" project carried out by FES. This project consists of an expert survey in the aftermath of the July 2019 parliamentary elections up to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a voter study conducted back in June 2021 by the Greek polling institute Prorata. The overarching aim of the project is a comparison between the positions of the parties and voters on various socioeconomic, cultural and political items, along with issues regarding the EU and the coronavirus crisis. The goal was to depict levels of congruence and incongruence between the positions of the party and those of its supporters. Given the absence of similar studies in Greece focusing on the period after the crisis, this comparison is particularly relevant for the quality of political representation in the country as a whole and constitutes a unique opportunity for ana-

lyzing both the supply and demand side of political competition in Greece in the post-memorandum era.

Our empirical research strategy focused on different objectives. The first one was to examine the structure of the ideological space and, subsequently, the position of various issues within this space. Another main objective was to measure the salience of the issues for each party. We located the exact position of all relevant political parties (i.e. those who elected MPs in the 2019 election), namely ND, the radical left party of SYRIZA, the left-wing party of KINAL-which is the successor party of PASOK, the communist KKE, the radical right party of Greek Solution and the leftist MeRA25 within the national ideological space by examining the proximity between these parties and particular ideological categories. Moving to the policy preferences of the electorate, this was an important component of the project in order to produce in this publication a complete overview of the major changes

in the ideological space in Greece by comparing the supply and demand-side of electoral competition.

The structure of the publication is as follows: in the next section, we present the methodology of the study. Then, the publication consists of two main parts. The first one is focused on the analysis of the positions of the parties. In these party-specific reports, the contributors analyze the salient issues for each political party. The first part ends with two more comparative contributions. The second main part of the publication consists on the analysis of the positions of the electorate and the comparison with parties. The second part ends with an overview of the positions of Greek voters. The last and final section presents the main conclusions.

2

METHODOLOGY: HOW WERE THE GRAPHS CREATED?

The graphs in this publication show the position of political parties in Greece in a two-dimensional political space, based on stances on 35 salient policy issues in the contemporary public debate. The most salient issues were selected by a team of academics and experts, based on a close examination of the parties' platforms and media discourse. Each issue statement is framed in such a manner that it relates to the economic left-right dimension or the cultural libertarian versus authoritarian dichotomy. The horizontal axis represents the economic dimension, differentiating political parties on policy issues related to state intervention in the economy, redistribution, taxation policy and the welfare state. The vertical axis addresses the post-materialist cleavages that juxtapose libertarian/progressive versus authoritarian/conservative positions. Here, typical issues are multiculturalism, immigration, national identity, gender equality and environmentalism. Parties were positioned on the issues with a 5-point scale ranging from "completely disagree", "disagree", "neutral", "agree" to "completely agree". They were positioned in accordance with their official stances on the issues, as expressed in their party manifesto, website and other campaign material, including reports in the media.

The spatial map is constructed on the basis of the aggregate positions of the parties on the two dimensions (the left-right dimension and the libertarian-authoritarian dimension). The precise party position is located in the centre of the ellipses. The ellipses represent the standard deviations of the party answers to all statements used to construct each axis. Thus, parties in favour of both left- and right-wing policy proposals have a wider ellipse on the left-right axis; parties in favour of both libertarian and authoritarian policy proposals have a lengthier ellipse on the libertarian-libertarian axis.

More specifically, the broadness of an ellipse refers to the spread on the left and right dimension whereas the height is the result of variation on the post-material axis. For the heatmaps, party voters are selected using the vote intention question, in which the respondents indicate which party they would vote for if elections were held today. The brighter the colour in the heatmap, the more concentrated respondents are in this particular position. The heatmaps were created with the use of representative survey data from Greek citizens collected in June, 2021. The survey questionnaire contained the same questions that were used for coding the party positions. Since the respondents answered the same questions, they were positioned in the same political space as the parties, allowing for a comparison between the aggregate stances of parties and electorates. Party voters were selected on the basis of the vote intention question, in which the respondents indicated which party they would vote for if elections were held today.

3

PART I: ANALYSIS OF THE POSITION OF THE GREEK PARTIES 2019-2021

3.1 THE STRATEGIC POSITION OF ND

Founded by Constantine Karamanlis right after the fall of the military coup in 1974, Nea Dimokratia (New Democracy, henceforth ND) has since been the major centre-right party in what is known as the Third Greek Republic. In a political system revolving around a distorted left-right continuum, taking the form of right on the one hand and the anti-right on the other (Moschonas 1995), ND had to survive like its Portuguese and Spanish counterparts under a political context biased against the ideological inheritance of a past authoritarian regime (Dinas 2017; Dinas and Northmore-Ball 2020). ND not only managed to survive in this context, but often thrived, establishing its dominance on the right and making some gains among centrist voters.

Ideologically, ND's profile resembles the trajectory of the right during this period (Kalyvas 1998). Initially a party resembling its Christian democratic counterparts of continental Europe, ND went on to adopt a more neoliberal outlook in the 1980s, switching back to a more centrist profile in the mid-2000's. Today, ND portrays itself as a modern party of the centre-right, which puts emphasis on economic reforms and managerial competence. Yet, it is worth focusing on some of the key policy stances of the party under its current leadership.

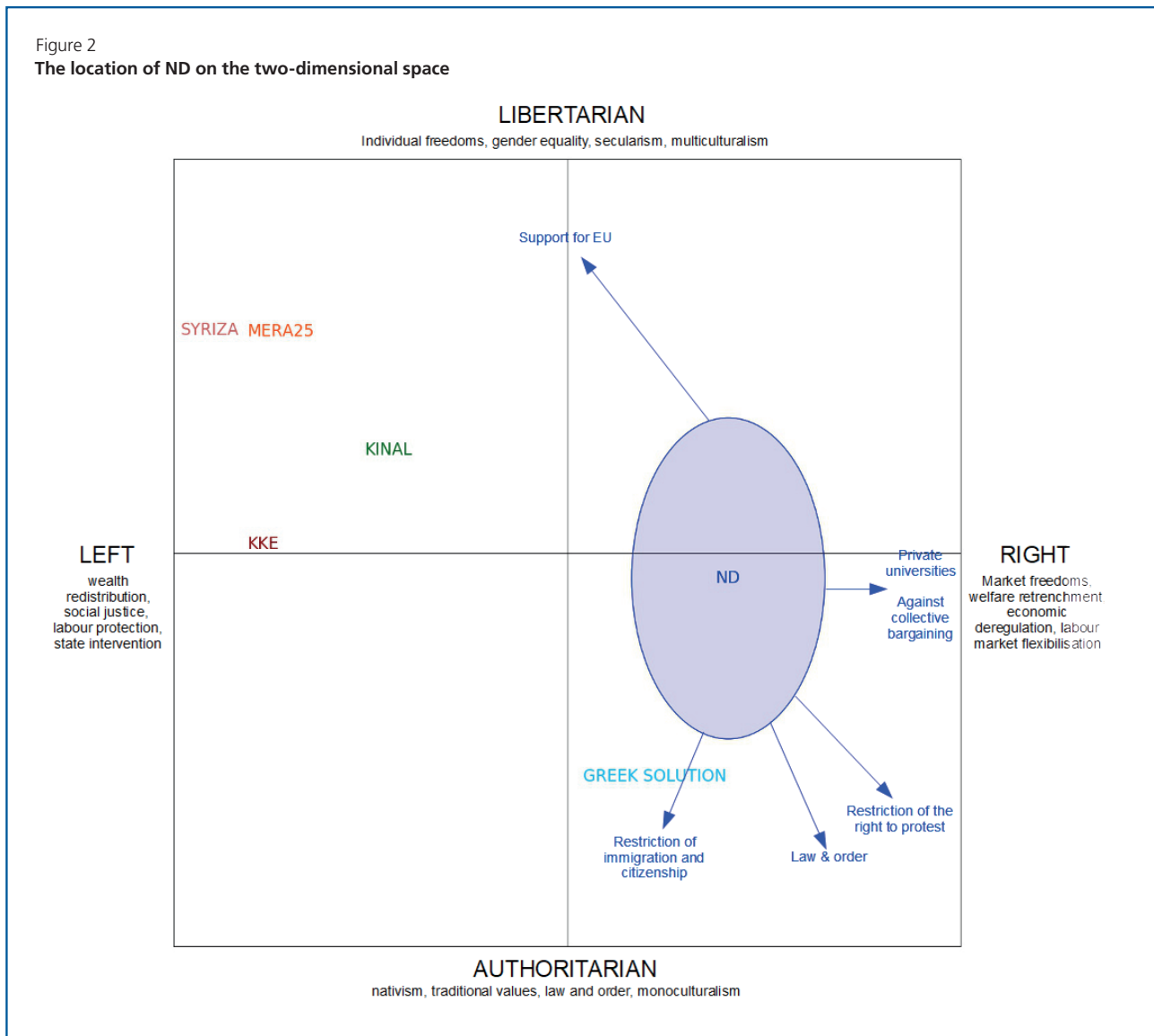
ND, as most parties on the right in Southern Europe, does not object to an advanced welfare state, although it does attempt to impose obstacles to the expansion of state intervention in economic policy. Now in government, the party aims to facilitate foreign investment, while at the same time purporting to alleviate inequalities that have been exacerbated after the pandemic outbreak. Nevertheless, the party also appears to be open to further flexibilization of the labour market, albeit without openly supporting welfare retrenchment. Perhaps its main flagship policy -, public university reform, includes two major pillars: the abolition of the asylum status, opening the way for police to intervene within university campuses, and the opening of the education system to non-public actors, thereby allowing the establishment of non-public universities in the country.

When it comes to its attitudes towards the European Union (EU), the party is consistently and unequivocally pro-EU, supporting an ever-increasing process of unification, as it is shown in **Figure 2**. On the other hand, ND has also been particularly prone to adopting pro-hawkish stances when it comes to law and order, as demonstrated by its firm opposition against demonstrations during the lockdown period. When it comes to healthcare, the party appears to favour a predominantly public health system. Nevertheless, it encourages private initiatives to complement the public national system.

ND's reaction to the church during the pandemic has been ambivalent. While originally religious ceremonies were halted, the church was eventually allowed to self-organize and restart its functions. In general, the ND does not appear eager to introduce significant innovations when it comes to the second political dimension where non-economic, or moral value issues are concerned. In the realm of symbolic politics, early criticisms for the stark absence of women from the ND cabinet were mitigated by the choice of the new President of the Republic, while the last cabinet reshuffle resulted in the inclusion of the first openly gay politician in the government, along with some rather conservative hardliners. This is a rather representative example of the current strategy of the party, which could be labelled as 'the fan-strategy', extending the party's appeal towards both the left and the right of the political spectrum. In terms of policies, ND does not seem to have advanced much identity issues, especially those related to minorities.

ND has also adopted a rather ambivalent position when it comes to immigration. On the one hand, the government took action to protect refugee children life in the camps, while on the other the government tried to transfer, concentrate, and expand the camps on particular islands. In general, the party holds a rather restrictive view on the issue of immigration and multiculturalism in general.

Figure 2
The location of ND on the two-dimensional space



3.2 THE STRATEGIC POSITION OF SYRIZA

The political debates all around Europe are currently dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic, which is a multifaceted problem: it concerns health policy, economic policy, the restriction of civil rights and constitutional freedoms, as well as the backsliding of gender equality. While Covid19 has economic repercussions worldwide, and for the EU as a whole, in Greece the situation is especially dramatic because the country has experienced considerable financial difficulties in the last decade (Katsanidou and Lefkofridi 2020). Besides the pandemic, climate change and immigration remain very important issues for the European Union (EU). The pandemic is also related to asylum, with thousands of asylum-seekers living in uncertainty and under inhuman conditions on Greek soil. The asylum problem can be linked to (Erdogan's) Turkey. While this is an issue discussed throughout Europe, it has different proportions in Greece: the country's geographical proximity to Turkey, which under Erdogan has an aggressive foreign policy, make it a security issue (related to foreign and defense policy). What are the strategic choices of the former

incumbent party of SYRIZA (Coalition of Radical Left) in the current political landscape?

In the last decade, SYRIZA moved from zero to hero, i.e. from being a marginal small party at the political fringes to getting executive power. SYRIZA was originally formed before the 2004 parliamentary election, as an alliance of political parties and groups, as well as independent politicians of both the reformist and radical left). It capitalized on the (unrealistic) promise of unchaining the Greek people from the Memoranda of Understanding (MoU). Capitulating on this key policy goal, it chose to remain in office by moderating its Euroscepticism and appealing to pro-EU segments of the electorate (Lefkofridi and Nezi 2020). While SYRIZA had raised high hopes for a better future, these hopes were betrayed due, inter alia, to the party's lack of experience with power, the state apparatus, and the EU system (Chatzopoulou and Lefkofridi 2019). The negative sentiment caused by SYRIZA's failures in government was primarily responsible for its defeat by ND in 2019 (rather than positive expectations for what ND could do differently). Although its defeat was expected, given the results of the May

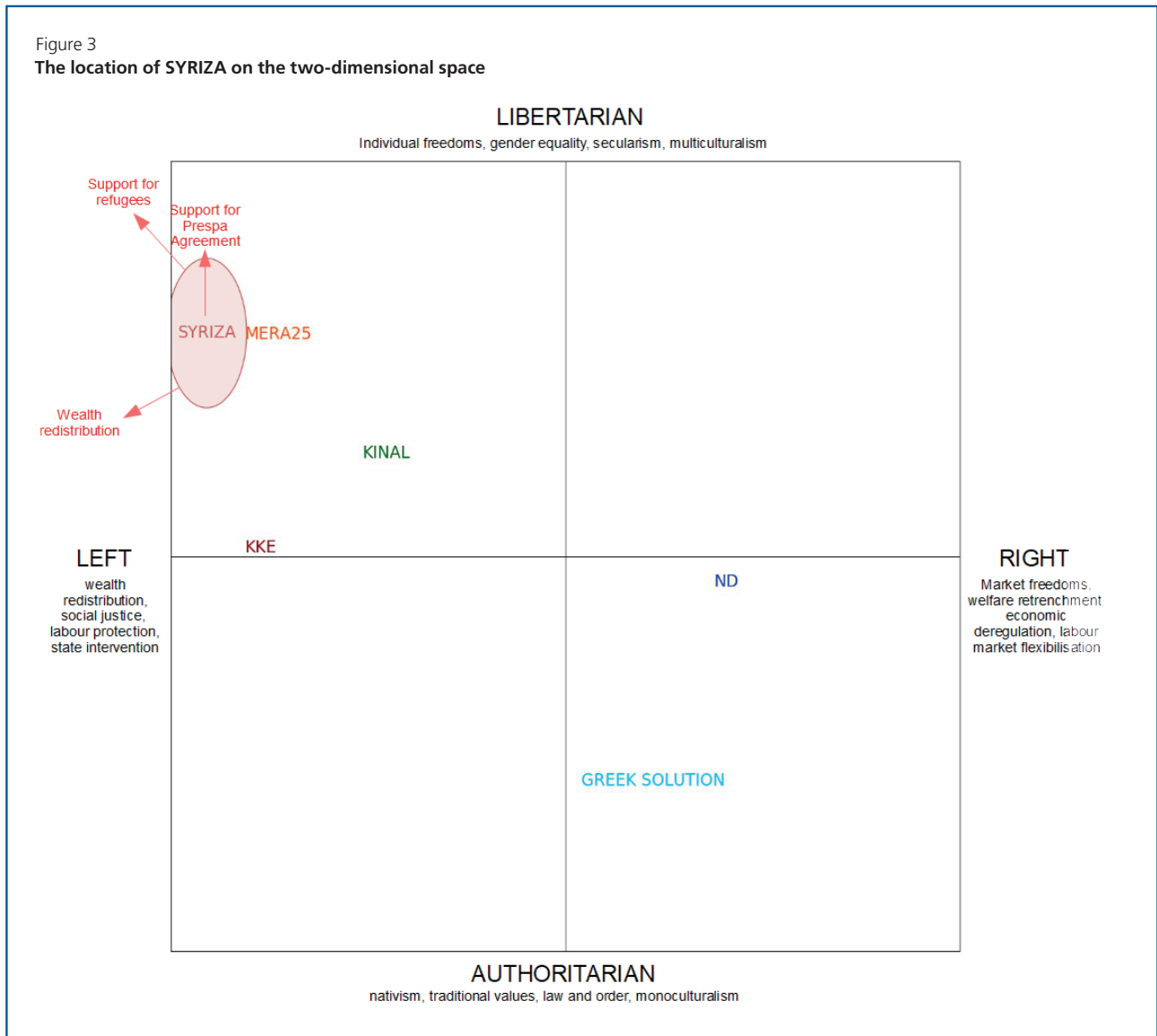
2019 European elections, SYRIZA managed to retain some electoral strength and took over the lead of the opposition by attracting 30 percent of the Greek vote --- especially among younger Greeks (approximately 40 percent of young voters supported SYRIZA). However, middle class voters punished SYRIZA, either by voting for ND—which attracted voters from all ideological camps (from the left-wing SYRIZA to the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn)—or by abstaining.

The current climate of insecurity at the borders, combined with the pandemic in an economically devastated economy, provides constraints as well as opportunities for SYRIZA. Despite having contributed to the solution of a longstanding Greek foreign policy problem (the name of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), SYRIZA has not managed to establish itself as a credible actor in this policy field, which is dominated by territorial/national security issues and where ND retains ownership. These issues are currently very salient and can thus benefit ND at the expense of SYRIZA. If security is linked to immigration, the issue is even more electorally costly for SYRIZA since the party advocates “no more tightening” of asylum policies (on the basis of human rights). SYRIZA generally has progressive views on immigration and multiculturalism – perhaps too progressive for a large majority of the electorate. The same holds for other sociocultural issues like gender equality and LGBT minority rights (gender issues). In the context of the Greek political party landscape, SYRIZA owns mainly issues relating to the GAL/TAN dimension, such as the rights of same sex couples, the integration of immigrants (citizenship) and asylum-seekers; as well as climate change and environmental protection. On the purely economic left-right cleavage, the party owns the issue of wealth redistribution (from rich to poor) but competes with KKE in the same area of the political space: as an advocate of the lower strata, the KKE has a stronger and longer-lasting record when it comes to workers’ rights. SYRIZA’s appeal is stronger with middle class progressive voters (over which it competes against KINAL and MeRA25).

SYRIZA should capitalize on issues with which it has a better reputation compared to its opponents (Lefkofridi and Nezi 2020) and voice the preferences of its (young) supporters. To retain its eminence among young voters, SYRIZA must hold its stances on environmental issues and climate change. For this purpose, it can combine the pandemic issue/criticism against government measures with its climate change policy and the necessity for a transformation of the consumption and production model. The pandemic shows that capitalism can be paused – even if only for a while – so this is the time to come up with credible proposals for sustainable development and ecologically respectful growth in the post-Covid-19 era. Sustainable development, in the context of the United Nations’ strategy, cannot be separated from the fight against poverty, or economic and gender inequality. If SYRIZA defines responsibility on the basis of such international agreements, it might be able to propose a coherent alternative path to the policies implemented by the ND government in the Covid19 pandemic - a path that corresponds to the preferences of SYRIZA supporters.

Besides pro-environmental and pro-redistribution economic policy stances, SYRIZA also endorses progressive sociocultural policies, as presented in **Figure 3**. The party should not moderate its very liberal positions on gender issues (LGBT rights and women emancipation) since these appeal to its electoral clientele, which is primarily young. If utilized electorally, the gendered consequences of Covid-19 in Greece could benefit SYRIZA against a male-dominated party/government with traditional views on gender, by means of attracting women’s vote from different age groups. Yet, it does not suffice to criticize government measures (e.g. lockdown, home schooling) and their consequences (overburdening for women); to attract votes on this issue, SYRIZA must be able to articulate credible proposals by voicing diverse gender-related issues heightened by the pandemic, such as the problem of domestic violence; or the undervalued and precarious care professions that are dominated by women (healthcare workers, cleaners, school & kindergarten teachers), which have proven fundamental for surviving the pandemic (front-liners). In this regard, SYRIZA’s opposition to flexible conditions of work can be revitalized: for instance, the high degree of flexibility expected from workers during the pandemic generates additional burden to the female strata of the population. In this regard, SYRIZA must present a clear vision for the post-COVID-19 Greek society, where all (hetero/homo) couples support each other by sharing household and care duties. Such a vision might appeal to young voters, for which having a family appears impossible in the current context of rampant unemployment.

Figure 3

The location of SYRIZA on the two-dimensional space

3.3 THE STRATEGIC POSITION OF KINAL

Since the beginning of the financial crisis in 2010, the Greek socialists undoubtedly underwent the most difficult period since PASOK's foundation in 1974. Few things in KINAL remind today of the erstwhile legendary antecedent, which first came to power in 1981 with a landslide victory of 48% as a movement, able to mobilize the masses, passionate its voters and cement strong identifications. Having succeeded historic social and political reforms in the 1980s, PASOK lost power in 1989 amidst financial crisis, economic scandals and an ambiance of decay related to the personal life of its emblematic founder and leader Andreas Papandreu.

His succession by Costas Simitis brought Greece closer to the European way of life and PASOK closer to the European centre left, which was then driven by "Third Way" policies. The progressive privatization of segments of the public sector, fiscal consolidation, public constructions, *rapprochement* with Turkey, rationalization in mentality and procedures of the state machinery were only few of the important advance-

ments, while the institutionalization of a series of Independent Authorities and the abolishment of stating religion in the national identities marked Simitis' scrupulous effort to fight political and religious patronage and favoritism. Despite significant modernization in the economy and institutions, a moderate stance in foreign policy and a laborious attachment in the EMU adherence project, his successor Costas Simitis did not prosper in leaving the party with a lasting social-democratic blueprint. Insofar as access to the state machinery and resources served to cease internal party antagonisms, conflicts impeded reforms, leaving Simitis' second mandate with the few but significant landmarks of dismantling the terrorist organization 17 November and preparing the country for the 2004 Olympic Games.

The return to power in 2009 under the leadership of son of the party's founder George Papandreu by winning 43.92%, found the party unprepared for the magnitude of the debt crisis which abruptly erupted less than a year later, entering the country in a decade-long exhausting effort of fiscal consolidation via acute austerity measures. PASOK has not yet

recovered from signing the bailout agreements with the IMF, EC and ECB. Abandoned first by a series of MPs who resigned, were deleted or migrated to other parties, PASOK progressively electorally evaporated, punished by its voters, who turned their back to the party (Dinas and Rori 2013).

Participation in the coalition government with the conservative ND and the center-left DIMAR from 2012 to 2015 did not reverse the electoral decline. Changes in leadership first by Vangelis Venizelos, then by Fofi Gennimata, as well as efforts to unify forces of the center-left further failed to stem the tide of the party's popularity, which fell from 12.28% in June 2012, to 6.29% in September 2015 and then stabilized at 8.10% in 2019. Named KINAL since the open primary of 2017, the party faces a bilateral electoral and political competition: cadres and voters have migrated both towards SYRIZA and ND (Rori 2020). Polarization over the Prespa agreement brought in the last SYRIZA government another series of former PASOK cadres. Likewise, the 2019 government of ND recruited former MPs, cadres and experts from the center and the center left. Haunted by the desertion, KINAL presented pre-electorally a blurry, folklore, anti-right message as it tried to minimize losses towards SYRIZA, with the latter trying systematically to absorb its remaining electorate by appropriating its symbols and identity. In reality, KINAL lost voters towards both sides (Rori 2020).

The death of the party leader Fofi Genimata in October 2021 altered the balance of power and the public's attitude towards the party, fostering emotion and prospect for party change. In December 2021, six cadres competed via a two-round open primary for the leadership election, which was endorsed by 270.706 party members and sympathizers. The landslide victory of the 43-year-old European MP Nikos Androulakis fueled optimism for renovation and altered the party's performance in opinion polls. For the first time since 2012, KINAL scores between 14 and 16% in a sequence of surveys three months after leadership change. While it remains to be seen whether this trend will persist under the new dynamics of party competition, the new leader operates a radical re-configuration of the party in a series of fields, such as the intra-party leading coalition, the party's image and positioning. While appointments in the party in central office signal a clear preference for a younger generation of cadres, relieved from the burden of previous party choices and practices, the reinstatement of the party's name and symbols suggests an effort of return to the party roots. The new leader claims a European social-democratic identity.

In the post-2019 period, the party meticulously works over concrete and well-thought policies. KINAL tries to perform in opposition by creating a distinct policy voice from ND and SYRIZA. Driven simultaneously by anti-right and anti-SYRIZA sentiment, the party has moved towards the left on economic positions and towards libertarian stances on socio-cultural issues.

State interventionism frames policy stances in economic issues. KINAL favours redistributive policies, workers' protection and a strong welfare state: it opposes flexible forms of

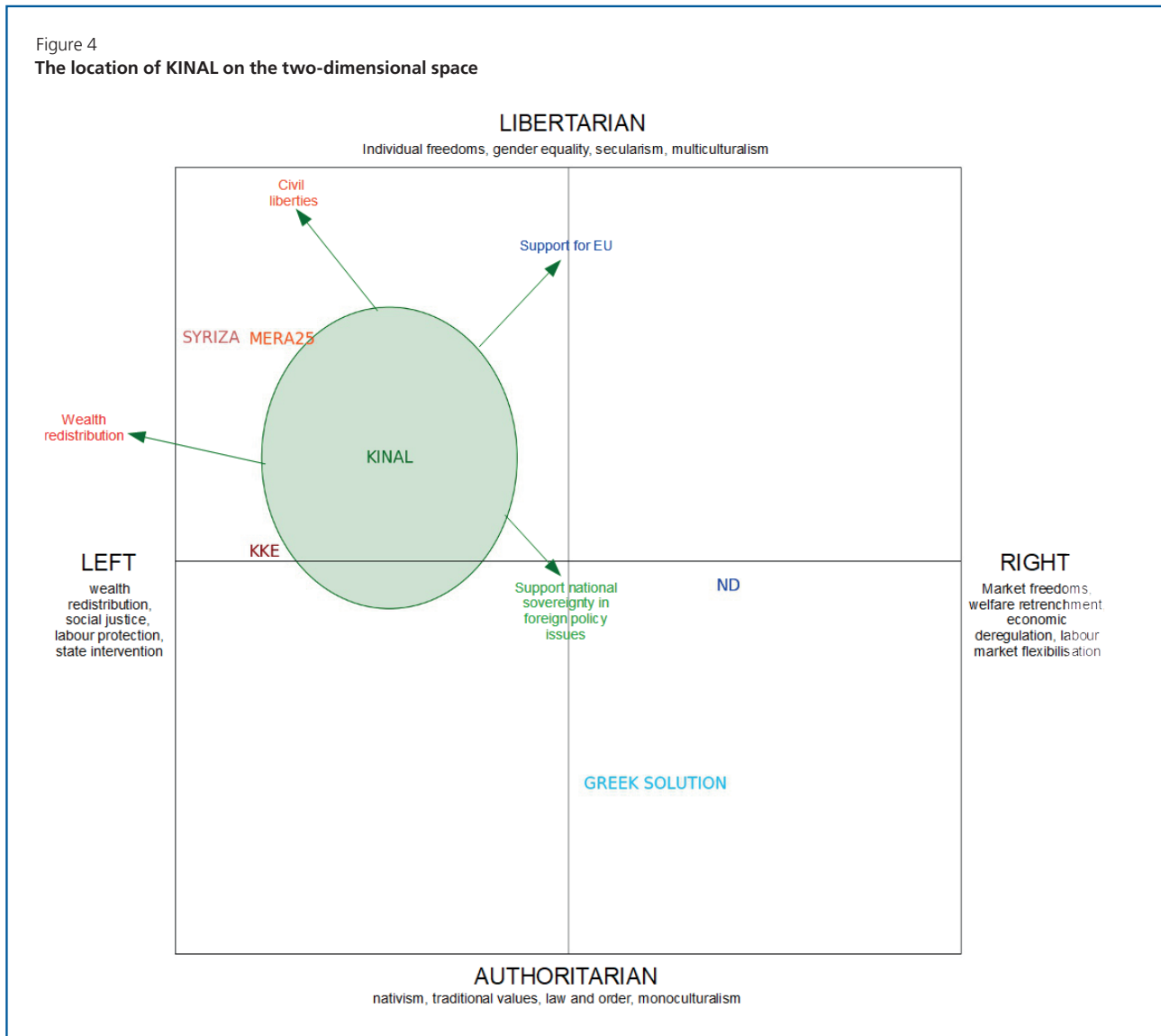
work and reduction of public sector employees; it supports stronger financial support for the unemployed. The strong role of the state prevails also with respect to security policies: the party backed the conservative bill which manages demonstrations and gave manifest or latent consent to restrictive measures in movement and rights during the pandemic. Nonetheless, KINAL does not favour harsher sentences associated to the destruction of public property and stands neutral with respect to the toughening of criminals' penalties.

Despite variation in the magnitude and the direction of changes, KINAL is consistently reformist when it comes to public health and education. Whereas it is ready to accept private universities, it opposes free market competition in public health reforms. Public health comes first in economic and social decisions related to the management of the pandemic: KINAL supports lockdowns and school closures in order to protect human lives, despite the uneven cost that those policies entail for women and children.

As it is shown in **Figure 4**, the party stands progressive in socio-cultural issues, such as gender equality, refugees and LGBT rights, and favors an open, plural society with respect to freedom of expression and religious freedoms. It argues in favor of equal rights of same sex and heterosexual couples. It holds, nonetheless, mixed positions with respect to immigration. While it backs more restrictive immigration policies, it supports the right to Greek citizenship for immigrants' children born in Greece and argues in favor of granting asylum to more refugees. KINAL supports the separation of church and state and it stood firmly during the pandemic on the obligation of the church to abide by the rules of social distancing.

KINAL is, lastly, fervently pro-European: it is in favor of the EU and the single currency, it expresses high commitment to the values and policies of European integration and is prepared to concede power to the union over common taxation schemes. That said, even though it argues in favor of a common European foreign and defense policy, KINAL is not prepared to sacrifice national sovereignty in exchange for common foreign and defense policy. Its positioning puts consistently national interest first when it comes to issues of defense spending and extending the country's territorial waters to twelve nautical miles. The principles of national interest were manifest when KINAL opposed the Prespa agreement and claimed sovereignty over the Greek-Turkish dispute.

Figure 4

The location of KINAL on the two-dimensional space

3.4 THE STRATEGIC POSITION OF KKE

The Communist Party of Greece (KKE) is the oldest party in Greece, founded in February 1918 as the Socialist Labor Party of Greece and renamed as the Communist Party of Greece in 1924. It is considered as one of the most strictly 'orthodox' communist parties

In the 2019 parliamentary elections KKE has managed to obtain 5.3% of the vote: a result that preserves its minor but stable position in the Greek party system. The 2012-2019 period was extremely critical for the party's survival, since it had to manage the meteoric electoral rise of SYRIZA, its main antagonist on the left to which KKE has suffered significant electoral losses, especially in the 2012 elections. The party ensured its survival by appealing to its ideological and historic tradition and by distancing itself from SYRIZA's 'left unity'-type coalition appeals, until the summer of 2015. SYRIZA's ongoing moderation enabled KKE to continue with this strategic path and preserve a base of loyal supporters sharing the party's sometimes unpopular appeals.

In programmatic terms, the party's goals are relatively unchangeable: it presents its organizational and ideological rigidity as its main political quality, in order to be considered as a 'reliable' and 'consistent' political actor by the Greek electorate. KKE displays a series of programmatic traits that compose its identity, at least in the last 25 years. First of all, the party is committed towards establishing a Soviet-style socialist system ['dictatorship of the proletariat'] either with democratic or revolutionary means. Secondly, KKE has adopted hard Eurosceptic positions [calls for exit from the EU] combined with traditional 'anti-imperialist positions', especially against NATO: these positions condition its foreign policy stances.; Thirdly, the party puts emphasis on the representation of the 'working class' and its social allies as 'popular strata' in general. Finally, the party is characterized with a total refusal of convergence or collaboration with the other radical left parties [Synaspismos/SYRIZA, extra-parliamentary left]. Those traits refer to the tradition of the Greek communist movement and were codified in KKE's 1996 party programme. Nevertheless, those traits re-emerged more intensified and slightly modified during the economic crisis period

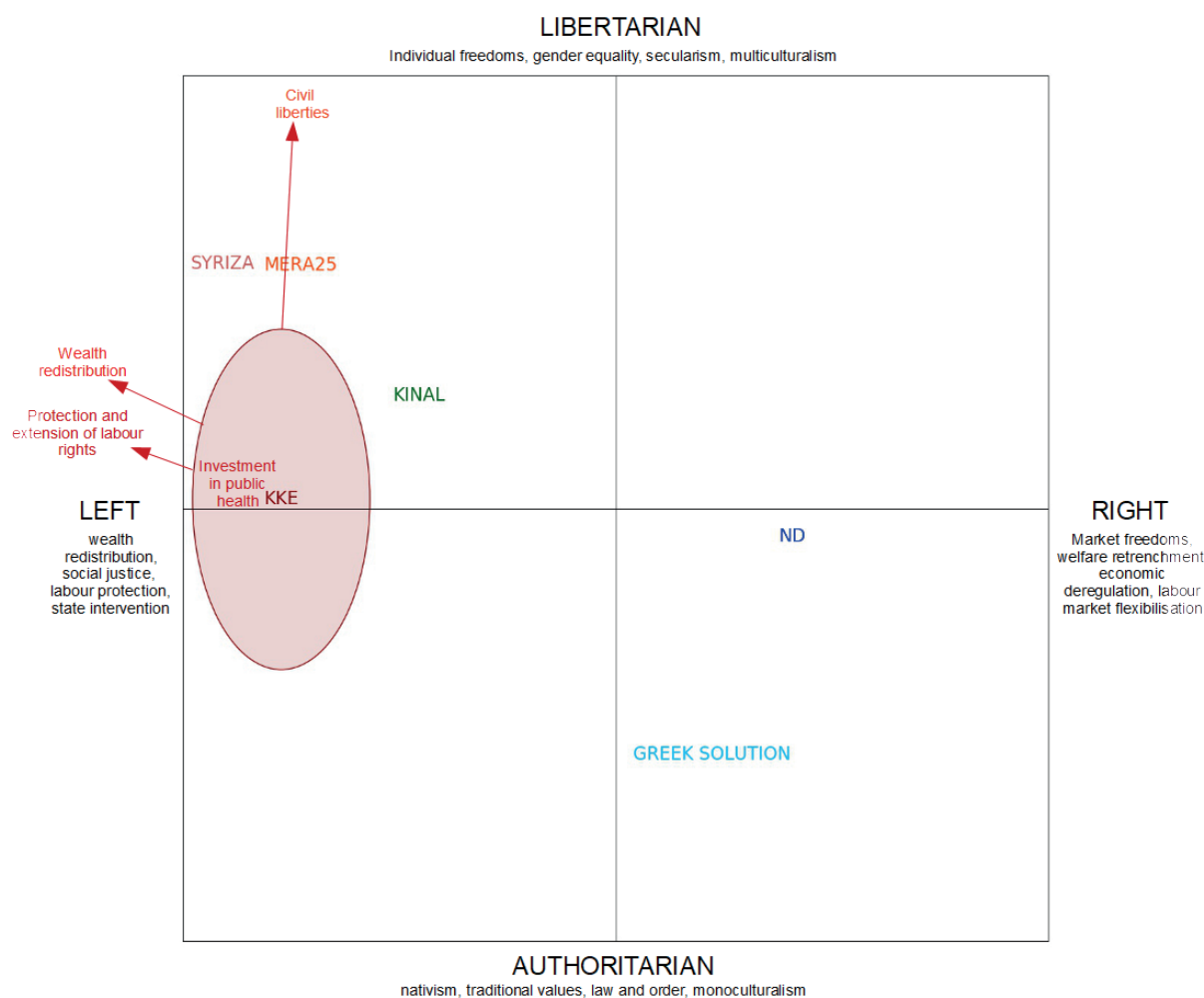
(from 2010 and after on), and especially in the party’s 2013 party programme. KKE prioritized the revolutionary path towards socialism and declared that its strategic goal is the establishment of ‘popular power’ and ‘popular economy’ [‘social ownership of the means of production’, ‘central planning’, ‘workers’ control’ etc.].

The party poses short-term demands concerning extensive redistribution measures, universal social security, labor protection, universal public education, inclusive arts and sports activities et (see **Figure 5**). However, KKE believes that these demands will be better served ‘in socialism’ and under a cohesive socialist programme. This influences the party’s position on the EU issue: while retaining its Eurosceptic positions, it supported the view that an exit from the Eurozone and the EU is not a feasible project, without the establishment of socialism. As for its anti-imperialist stance, KKE previously believed (as stipulated in its 1996 party programme), that the country was dependent upon more powerful ‘imperialist’ countries and, in this sense, the struggle for ‘national independence’, was a struggle with anti-imperialist and anti-cap-

italist characteristics aimed at breaking the so-called ‘imperialist chain’ and consistent with the party’s goals. In the new party programme, Greece is portrayed as the part of an ‘imperialist pyramid’, meaning that it is dependent upon other countries, but also as a minor imperialist force against weaker countries. Therefore, KKE perceives any international conflict or confrontation as ‘intra-imperialist antagonisms’ and tends to downplay ‘national independence’ in favor of predominantly anti-capitalist goals.

Moreover, the party puts the traditional industrial working class at the epicenter of its appeals by prioritising labour struggles. That is how it distanced itself from the anti-austerity struggles that were based on populist appeals, counteroffering its own platform of ‘social alliance’ consisting mainly of class-based appeals and mobilizations. Additionally, KKE is suspicious towards identity politics, considering that the latter obscure the class character of social conflict and struggles. Finally, KKE negated any possibility of participating in an ‘anti-memorandum’ or left government, by stressing the non-realism of this kind of government within a capitalist system.

Figure 5
The location of KKE on the two-dimensional space



The party considers that all injustices are a result of the capitalist system or the austerity measures aimed at its reproduction, can only be solved in a socialist system. This point of view contradicts with SYRIZA's position on the issue and its overall strategy. Thus, KKE portrays SYRIZA as an unreliable political actor, with inherent social democratic character, which seeks to rehabilitate the 'bourgeois political system' and 'trap' the working class on a 'one-way path' of 'compromises', harmful for its interests.

After the 2019 elections, the party found itself in the position of a principled opposition vis-à-vis the New Democracy government, by stressing the pro-capitalist character of its policies. Regarding the issue of the Greek-Turkish tension, the party keeps a moderate position by calling for the defense of national independence and at the same time pinpointing that the tension is the result of the antagonism between the Greek and Turkish bourgeoisies and imperialist states. As for the management of the Covid-19 pandemic, KKE highlights the inadequate functioning of the public health system, which it attributes to constant budget cuts and understaffing, thus calling for increases of the healthcare system budget and its personnel. Moreover, the party calls for the normal functioning of public schools, which means an increase of teaching personnel and proliferation of classrooms to cope with health protocols. Finally, the party rejects the governmental ban of public protests for health reasons (including the extreme policing during the pandemic crisis), by mobilizing its members and supporters in protests that respected health protocols (May 1st and November 17th). The party accuses the government of jeopardizing democratic rights and implementing an authoritarian agenda, while using the pretext of the public health emergency. On this basis, KKE agreed to sign a public document condemning the banning of the 17th of November demonstration along with SYRIZA and MeRA25, an unprecedented act of convergence with the other radical left parties.

3.5 THE STRATEGIC POSITION OF GREEK SOLUTION

Since it succeeded in entering the national parliament in 2004, the Greek radical right has been transformed several times. Its initial success came from a populist radical right party (Popular Orthodox Rally-LAOS). Nevertheless, the significant political and economic transformations that Greek society faced after 2009, resulted in the rise of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn (GD) party in 2012. Again, in the 2019 national and European elections, the populist radical right party of Greek Solution (EL) appeared and replaced GD. The party was founded in 2016 by Kyriakos Velopoulos, a former member of LAOS and New Democracy (ND), declaring a pro-Russian and a pro-Orthodox direction.

Although the party was founded in 2016, it was not until the beginning of 2019 that gained popularity; therefore, its conversational structure resulted in gaps regarding its position on specific topics. However, we will attempt sketching its position in several regards. The party has many similarities with LAOS. The most important one is considered to be its

type of leadership, as Kyriakos Velopoulos attempts to copy Giorgos Karatzaferis as a TV persona, gaining popularity from televised appearances and talkshows. Simultaneously, the party revolves around its leader, who remains its most visible persona, while any internal disagreements seem to end by expelling the dissidents.

As presented in **Figure 6**, EL is a culturally conservative party, which becomes more conservative when it comes to covid-19 related issues. In terms of its political agenda, the party has clarified its foreign policy position. In a period of severe tensions between Greece and Turkey, EL perceives it as impossible for Greece to follow a common E.U. foreign and defense policy, as it is against the country's interests. Instead, it supports an increase in defense spending, followed by an expansion of Greek territorial waters. Its economic positions promote a centrally planned economy, in which workers will remain secure, while the unemployed ones will gain further state support. To strengthen its support for such an economic model, the party has no plans to reduce the number of public employees or to adopt flexible work forms to combat unemployment.

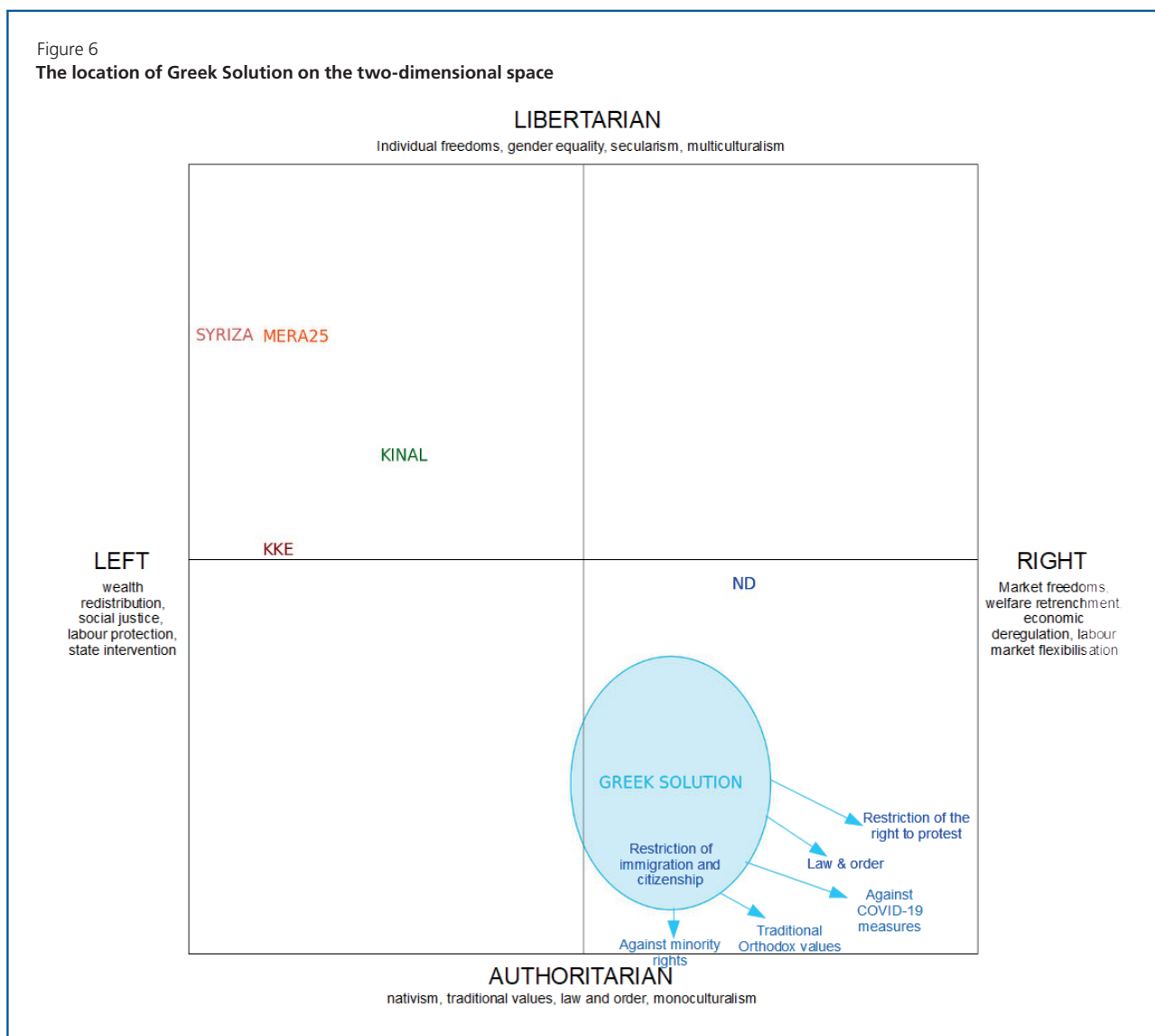
European integration remains a controversial field for the party, as it combines specific positions with unaddressed topics. Moreover, Greek Solution adopts a very critical position towards the Euro currency, saying that the participation of the country in the Eurozone is a 'disaster for Greece'. As the party promotes its vision for a Europe of nations, it disagrees with any EU interference in member-states' budgets. However, it omits to clarify its position about the EU when it comes to taxation. Despite the abovementioned positions, the party has not yet clarified neither how it stands regarding Greece's E.U. membership, nor how it envisions the future of the European integration process.

LGBT rights and immigration are core topics in the populist radical right parties' agenda. EL is strictly against any equalisation between gay and heterosexual couples' rights, reflecting the Greek Orthodox Church's positions. In terms of immigration, the party views the migratory flows as a danger for Greece, and is opposed to offering asylum to more refugees, arguing the Greek state has to implement more measures against immigration. In parallel, the party understands Greek citizenship as a *jus sanguinis*, and opposes granting citizenship to immigrant children born in Greece. Due to the fear of immigration, the party accepts only those immigrants that respect Greek culture and values. Simultaneously, it stands against their right to worship in specific places.

The Covid-19 pandemic obligated Greek political parties to clarify their positions on several topics. Consequently, EL declared its opposition to a package of 'blind' measures against the pandemic, as, at the same time, they were economically unbearable. Next to this, as a pro-Orthodox party, EL openly disagreed with the prohibition of church gatherings during the pandemic. Such a position comes in line with its general overview of the continuation of the church-state relationship. Except for that, the party took specific positions regarding the health care system. Therefore, it declared its support for

Figure 6

The location of Greek Solution on the two-dimensional space



governmental investments in hospitals – regardless of tax hikes – while it positioned itself against the introduction of free-market competition in the health care system. What remains unknown is how the party understands women’s position during the Covid-19 pandemic, as they spend much more time with their household.

Law and order – core characteristics of the populist radical right party family – occupy a prominent position in the party’s discourse. Specifically, the party endorses a more severe punishment for criminals, while it asks for strictly police responses when comes to the destruction of public property. Even though the party adopts many ideological stances similar to those of other European populist radical right parties, it seems unable to extend its agenda to ecological issues. It has declared opposition to the stop of lignite mining but has no stances regarding global warming and climate change.

In conclusion, EL is a conformation of how the Greek far-right has been positioning itself for more than a decade: while on the economic axis it adopts positions more to the left end of the ideological spectrum, on the cultural axis it is placed on

the conservative side. Kyriakos Velopoulos, the founder of the party has succeeded remaining in the political scene after LAOS electoral defeat. By developing his political agenda, he effectively combined a Eurosceptic discourse with left-leaning economic policies. The outbreak of the pandemic crisis has helped him to promote his party’s economic programme, as he openly criticizes the government’s measures against the pandemic, due to their economic fallout. The party’s Eurosceptic approach explains its pro-Russian direction, while its anti-LGBT stances bring the party closer to the official positions of the Greek Orthodox Church.

3.6 THE STRATEGIC POSITION OF MeRA25

In the highly polarized parliamentary election of 7 July 2019, two new parties managed to enter the Greek Parliament. One was the new party of MeRA25 founded by ex-Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis following his departure from SYRIZA in 2015. The other one is Greek Solution, a nationalist one founded by Kyriakos Velopoulos, a former ND member and ex-MP of the right-wing populist LAOS (Popular Orthodox Rally).

Both parties are very personalistic and rely almost exclusively on the popularity of their leaders among their supporters.

The leader of MeRA25, Varoufakis opposed the new bailout agreement signed by the former PM and leader of SYRIZA Alexis Tsipras and founded a European-wide anti-austerity movement called Democracy in Europe Movement 2025 (DiEM25), whose Greek affiliate party is MeRA25 (European Realistic Disobedience Front). The Greek party was founded on 27 March 2018 and managed to attract many disillusioned voters to the left of SYRIZA in the 2019 elections. Furthermore, it was successful in displacing the extra-parliamentary parties of LAE (Popular Unity) and PE (Course of Freedom) as non-communist left-wing alternatives to SYRIZA from the Greek political arena. MeRA25 failed to gain a seat in the European Parliament (EP) by less than 500 votes, but managed to pass the electoral threshold of 3% and entered in the Greek Parliament electing 9 MPs for the first time (see Tsatsanis, Teperoglou and Seriatos 2020).

According to the main statements of this party, the “audience” of MeRA25 is not socially limited to specific classes of Greeks society or professional categories. In principle, it can attract any Greek who disagrees with the bailout agreements and attributes responsibility for the deep recession to the severe austerity policies implemented on the basis of the bailouts.

MeRA25 could be labelled as a leftist party with a clear anti-Memorandum agenda. Its main priority is the restructuring of the country’s public debt based on linking the repayment rate of public debt with the growth rate of nominal national income.

In other words, economic issues with a focus on the debt sovereign crisis, the banking system and the (perceived as) disastrous bailout agreements are at the top of the party agenda. Their main objective in the current Greek Parliament is to revive the highly polarizing political divide that existed in the years of the crisis between those in favour of the bailout agreements, the so-called in Greek ‘mnemoniakoi’ and those against (‘anti-mnemoniakoi’) (i.e. ‘pro-memorandum’ vs ‘anti-memorandum’ political division). However, political competition in Greece is no longer influenced by the pro-anti bailout positions and it is replaced by other decisive issues, as we conclude in this study.

Despite the dominant position of economic issues in the discourse of MeRA25 (its leader is an economist, after all), the party also demands fundamental changes in EU institutions. Yanis Varoufakis criticizes the anti-democratic nature of EU institutions and decision-making structures. He continually stresses the need for radical reforms at the EU level, that would make supranational institutions and governance more transparent and accountable to European citizens. Another main position of the party regards Greece’s Eurozone membership. According to the manifesto of the party, Greece should never have entered the eurozone. Another main pillar of the programme of the party is the “European Green New Deal”, aimed at implementing measures against climate change and economic inequalities at the EU level. Finally, it

could be argued that the party encompasses an anti-establishment rhetoric in domestic politics against the former big parties in Greece which it blames them for the economic crisis.

The political landscape in the ‘post-memorandum’ era of Greek politics presents some interesting features. First of all, our findings indicate that the Greek political space is two-dimensional - it is definitely not unidimensional. Party positions on cultural issues form a clearer dimension structure of ideological space in comparison to the left-right materialist one. As in other countries, there is a conflict between Greek parties concerning cultural change in the age of globalization, i.e. the promotion of cosmopolitan transnational identities as well as values of cultural openness and tolerance at the expense of national identity and traditional values. In the socio-cultural dimension, the party of MeRA25 adopts a clear cosmopolitan outlook in favour of multiculturalism and against anti-immigration policies. Therefore, MeRA25 is a typical example of a leftist, green, libertarian party in the Greek political landscape, as presented in **Figure 7**.

Furthermore, there is growing evidence of the emergence of a pro-European versus anti-European axis of political competition in Greece, compared to the period prior to the crisis. This increasing politicisation of the EU dimension permeates and affects the entire party system. In the case of MeRA25, regardless of whether the vertical axis is composed by EU-related issues only or cultural issues (as presented below in this publication), MeRA25 adopts a Euro-critical far left position or a socially progressive Euro-critical position, depending on the composition of the axes.

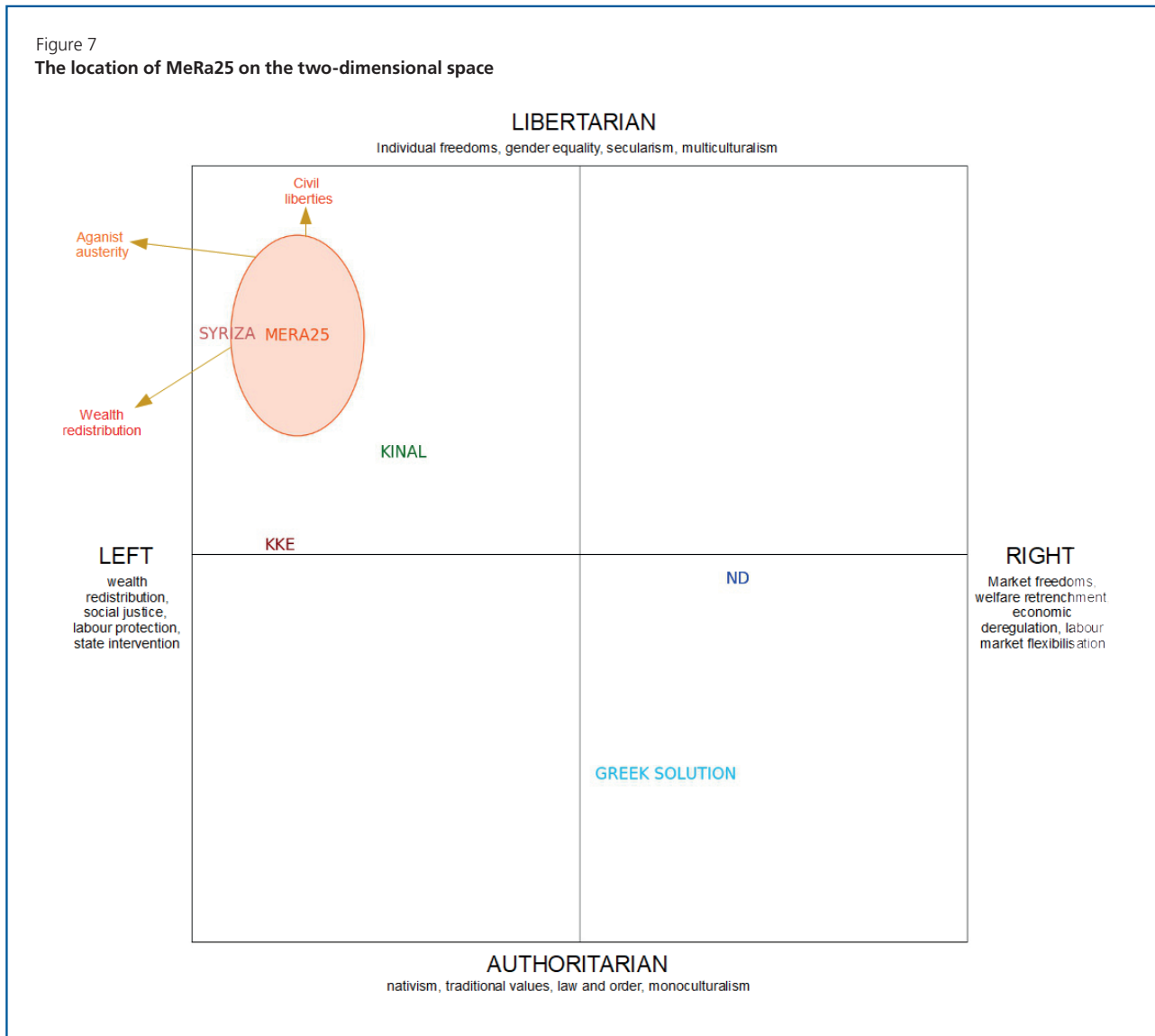
We might conclude that the position of the party is mainly determined by its anti-bailout stances and the staunch rejection of economic and political aspects of EU integration. With the inclusion of MeRA25 and SYRIZA on the one hand and ND, and Greek Solution on the other, polarization along the cultural axis appears to be significantly more acute than polarization along the left-right materialist axis. Furthermore, it is evident that divisions over issues related to the ceding of national sovereignty or stances toward immigration are of great importance when it comes to political divisions in the Greek political landscape.

3.7 DIMENSIONALITY OF THE GREEK POLITICAL SPACE

Political dimensionality allows for utilizing data as a means of graphically portraying how political parties and citizens understand political conflict at any given time. It gives them the tools to navigate a complex world and sort difficult issues along familiar conflict lines. This virtual system of understanding is a subject of constant change by each crisis the system faces. The Greek political system is no exception.

The main division in the Greek system is on the left-right dimension. That is hardly surprising for a European country. It is a very flexible dimension in terms of meaning, as political parties have kept on introducing new issues in this dimension over the years. This absorbing power of the left-right dimen-

Figure 7
The location of MeRa25 on the two-dimensional space



sion has made it the strongest predictor of party choice. The largest political parties in Greece positioned themselves along the lines of this dimension to provide the necessary antithesis and help voters choose according to their policy preferences. The concepts of the Left and the Right included issues of the economic dimension as well as cultural and EU related issues.

Specifically, the Right encompasses pro-liberal and pro-market positions in economic terms, while it stands for more restrictive policies in terms of immigration, nationalism and civil rights. The Left, on the other hand, stands for state intervention and stronger market regulation, more integrative attitudes towards immigration and inclusive civil rights policies.

The particularity of Greece is that of significant state intervention in the economy and a rather disproportionate role of the state in economic activity. This role was rarely challenged by political parties, even by those on the right, and any de-regulation was slow and careful. This changed when the crisis hit Greece. The bailout agreements imposed austerity measures and strong deregulation in the country. They were related to the clause of Greece remaining in the eurozone and even in

the EU. The importance of the events and the imminent danger for the Greek economy combined the issue of the economy with that of EU membership and made the so-called memorandum dimension the most prominent vote determinant in the crisis years. This created a new political space where the old left-right dimension kept its sociocultural content, and where both left- and right-wing parties could position themselves on the pro- or anti-memorandum dimension.

As the so-called Greek crisis came to a symbolic end in 2019, one question remains open: is the political landscape of the crisis here to stay, or should we expect a new equilibrium that reflects the more traditional division lines of the Greek political system? Initially, it seemed that Greek dimensionality came back to the pre-crisis normality, where the cultural left-right divide was dominant and accompanied with two less significant economic and EU dimensions that correlated with each other. Having said that, it would be very premature to claim that this is the new normal for four reasons.

First, the 2019 elections took place in a climate of relative political disillusion that diminished the role of ideology for

vote choice and increased the role of competence. It is certain that the economy is again viewed as an issue where no alternatives are in place. Most of the population agrees that it simply needs to work, so the Greek economy gets a jump start again. In a similar vein, the migration crisis of 2015 became another issue of competence. As it became clear that the migration streams are not combined with a question of integration in the Greek society, but rather with the good management of asylum applications and flows towards the rest of Europe or back to the countries of origin, this issue was also included in the package of competence.

Secondly, the recent crises (sovereign debt crisis, migration crisis, and Covid-19 pandemic) have shown that no country can act independently within the EU and all benefit from this interdependence. That signals that EU membership and integration, along with specific policies related to EU polity and policy issues are very important for domestic politics. The EU issue is thus an integral part of the dimensionality of the Greek political space.

Thirdly, it is unclear how the positioning of various political parties in Greece on the issue of Turkey will play out. Erdogan's aggressive foreign policy and the involvement of various EU actors taking opposing stances (eg. Germany's containment and France's opposition to Erdogan) can lead to the inclusion of this issue in the EU dimension. Alternatively, it can become more connected to a dimension combining issues of security, immigration and policing, that is attached to the socio-cultural progressive conservative dimension.

Finally, the newest crisis, the Covid-19 pandemic, imposed new pressure in almost all aspects of political and everyday life. Initially, the pandemic was not politicized and was mainly treated as a management issue. In Greece, the government managed the first wave rather well, but a series of decisions aimed at keeping the economy open led to a less successful management of the virus. As the vaccination strategy starts to unfold, the politicization of various aspects of this crisis seems inevitable. Inequalities in Greek society have been made clearer due to the pandemic. Issues that seem prominent are the digitalization of society, the enhancement of the welfare state through a well-functioning healthcare system and unemployment. The pandemic might also bring a revival of old issues such as the church-state cleavage, as the church poses significant resistance to governmental attempts to contain the pandemic. What was not very present in Greece, but is increasingly apparent now, is the rejection of educated elites and science. It is not yet very politicized, and cuts across party lines. But this is something that merits future observation.

3.8 THE SUPPLY-SIDE OF POLITICAL COMPETITION IN GREECE: MAIN CONCLUSIONS

One of the main conclusions from the analysis of the positions of the Greek parties is that the political landscape in the post-memorandum period has a two-dimensional structure, as it is shown in **Figure 8**. As the case studies for each party in this publication have shown, stances towards the European Union appear to be aligned with the socio-cultural axis, i.e. attitudes on a range of social, cultural and political issues.

In an attempt to capture the complexity of contemporary Greek politics, we have tried to explore the peculiar alignment on the vertical axis of political competition between authoritarian versus libertarian with pro/anti-integration positions. Therefore, we produced two additional separate figures; one with only European issues on the vertical axis (see **Figure 9**) and another with only the sociocultural issues (see **Figure 10**). The main conclusions could be summarized in three main points:

1. There seems to be some degree of polarization along the left-right axis, particularly between conservative ND and the left-of-center parties (SYRIZA, KINAL, KKE, MeRA25). For Greek Solution, economic issues appear to be less salient and its position on the economy is somewhat ambivalent - same as other right-wing populist parties in Europe.
2. The European dimension cross-cuts the left-right economic divide and that European issues are predominantly responsible for the two-dimensional character of the Greek party system. Even though parties on the left (especially the KKE) were always the main representatives of Euroscepticism in Greece, the politicization of EU-related issues during the economic crisis has had an impact on the structure of political competition. In the previous decades, the overwhelmingly pro-EU stance of the Greek electorate meant that this dimension of competition was mostly dormant. What is most noteworthy in this figure is the extent to which the pro-/anti-European axis divides and discriminates among the parties of the left, which adopt positions across the entire spectrum. ND and KINAL are presented as the main pro-European parties, whereas the communist party belongs to the hard-eurosceptic group. The position of SYRIZA and MeRA25 reflect their more general strategic choice to rely upon more eurocritical stances. While, we believe that there is a tendency towards an emergence of a transnational cleavage in Greece (Hooghe&Marks 2018), it is too soon to tell whether this will be transformed into a stable cleavage or will remain a rather ephemeral division.

- Once the European integration dimension is removed (Figure 10), the findings seem to go in line with the classic argument made by Herbert Kitschelt (1994) on European party system. Kitschelt argued that there is a left-libertarian vs right-authoritarian dimension of political competition. However, certain party legacies and ideological features (e.g. the unreformed communist ideology of KKE) or the catch-all character of other parties (e.g. the coexistence of liberal with traditionalist and authoritarian tendencies within ND) somewhat complicates the structure of competition.

Figure 8
Locations of Greek parties on the two-dimensional space (2019-2021)

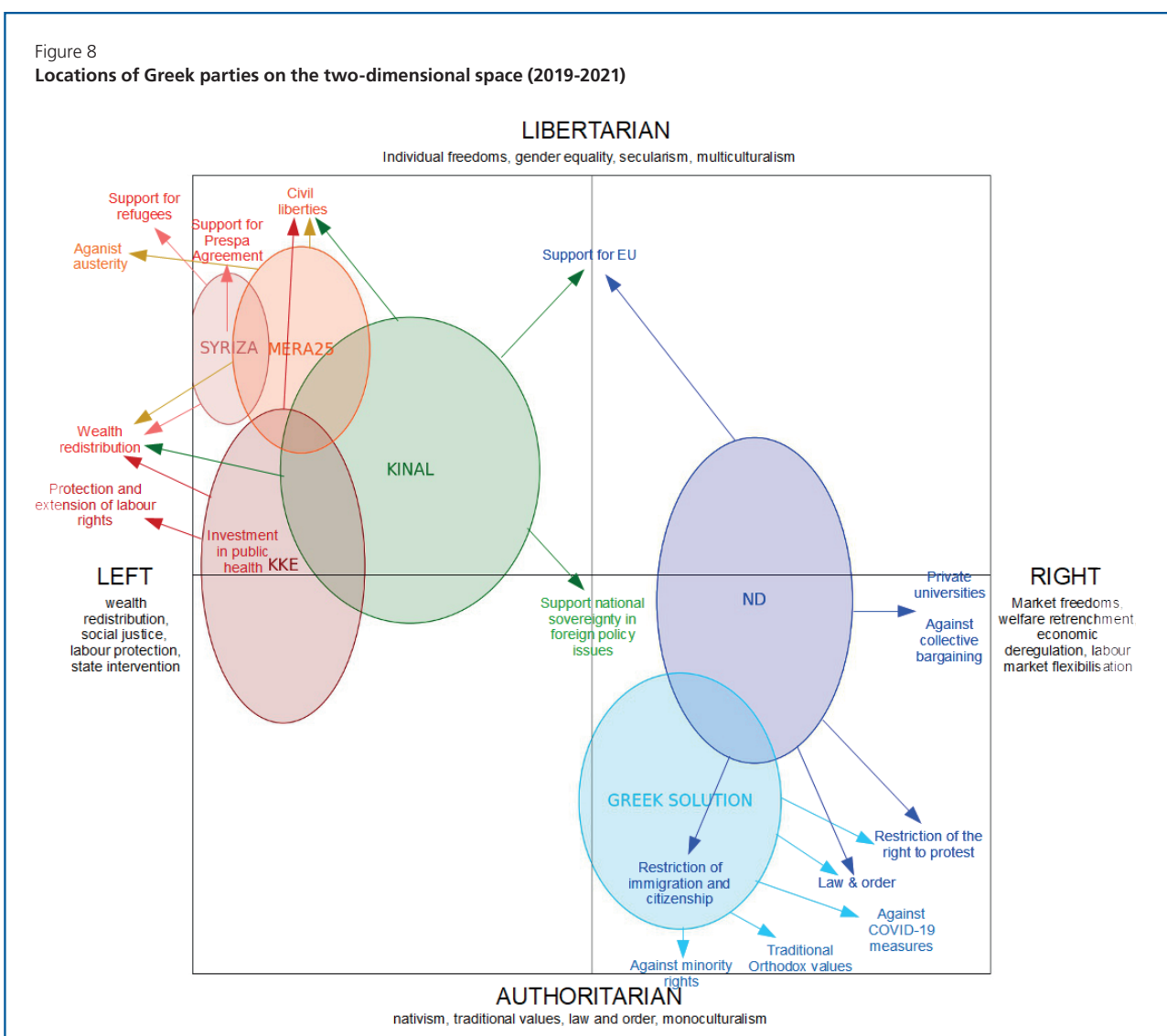


Figure 9

Location of Greek parties on the two-dimensional space (with EU-issues only on the vertical axis)

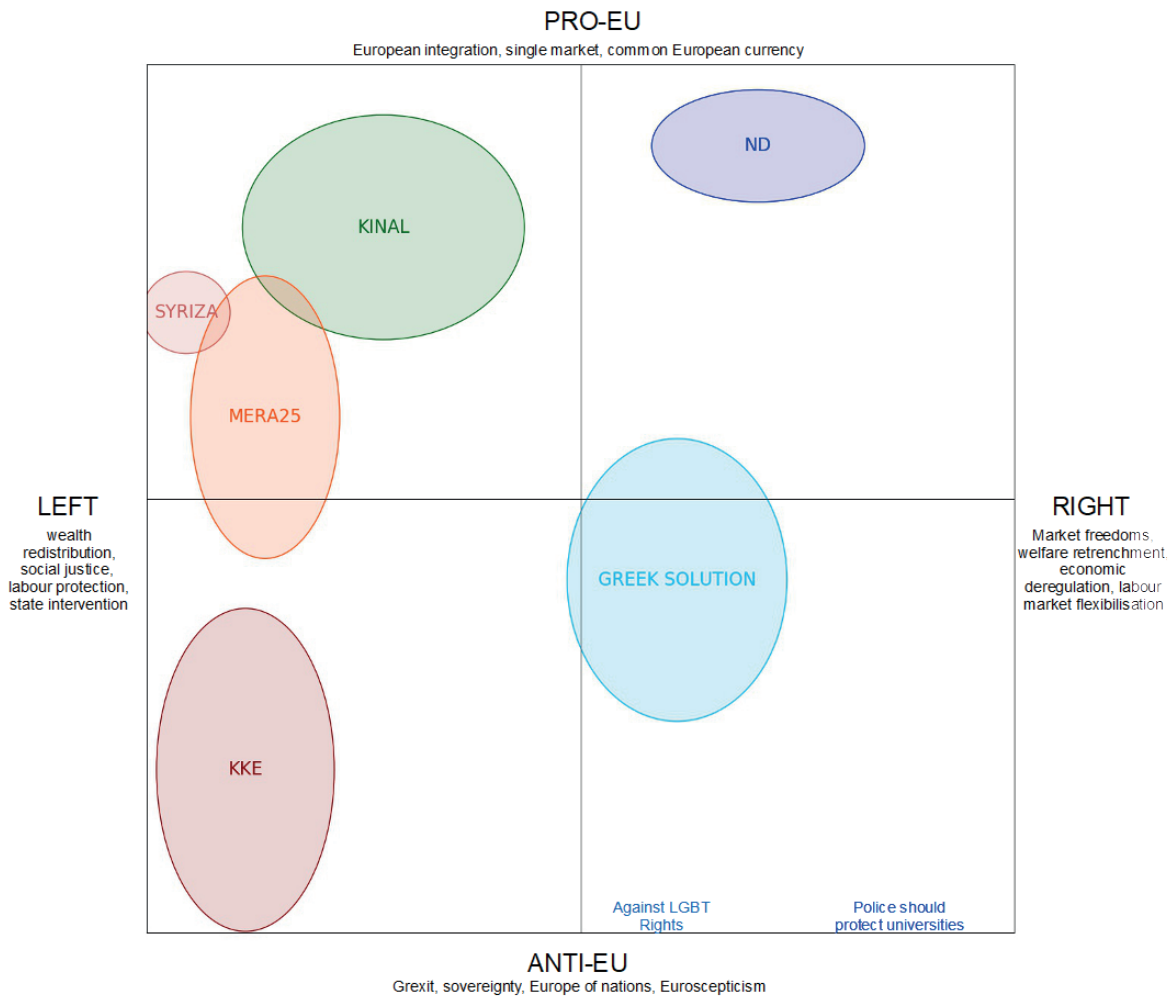
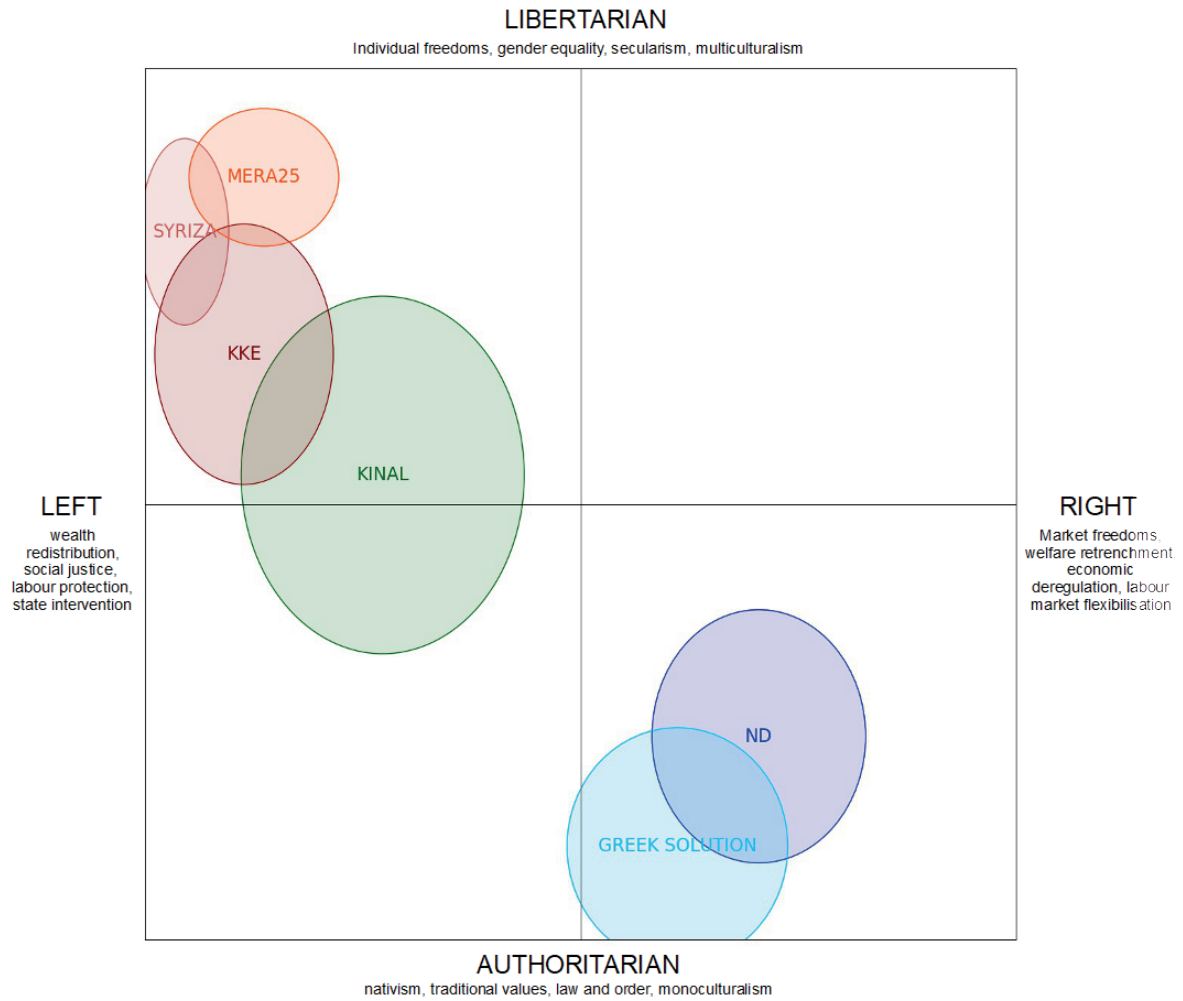


Figure 10

Location of Greek parties on the two-dimensional space (with cultural issues only on the vertical axis)



4

PART II: ANALYSIS OF THE POSITIONS OF GREEK VOTERS IN 2021 AND COMPARISON WITH PARTIES

4.1 THE POSITION OF ND VOTERS

ND is the party closest to the Greek two-dimensional median (the center of the political landscape). In a way, the easiest rough-and-ready way to recreate the distribution of Greek voters along the two main dimensions of party competition, the economic one and the cultural identity one, is to put those of ND with those of SYRIZA together – the two biggest parties in the country. The bimodality emerging once these two sets of voters are combined is quite telling: the bulk of people appears almost exactly in the midpoint of the Cartesian space, while a smaller but non-trivial mass appears to form in the top left corner, denoting both economically left-wing and identity-wise libertarian stances. That being said, there is an interesting asymmetry here, with most of the people who end up in the upper left quarter professing clearer economically left-wing stances, rather than libertarian ones. Looking once more at the overall graph, where all respondents are placed, one can easily detect a rather unequivocal match between parties and voters: they both follow the same pattern, i.e. a straightforward negative correlation between the two dimensions: libertarians are more left-wing and vice-versa; while authoritarians are more right-wing and vice versa. To be sure, this is far from a Greek exceptionality. Nevertheless, it is still interesting that Greece is a country with a relatively high overlap between the two dimensions: one could probably easily fold the two-dimensional plane along the diagonal to end up with one dimension, without any significant loss of information, either for voters or for parties.

A common pattern that emerges when looking at nearly all parties in the Greek political landscape is again a phenomenon that is far from unique in the Greek case and is rather documented quite extensively in the literature: parties tend to be more extreme than their voters. Despite its very centrist profile, the ND is no exception to this pattern (see **Figure 11**). Interestingly, the party appears more extreme than voters in the economic dimension than on the identity dimension. Quite counter-intuitively, the direction of the mismatch is the opposite from the one that corresponds to the central tendency among the electorate: the ND is more right-wing, not more left-wing, than its voters when it comes to economic stances. This mild discrepancy could be accounted for by the distorting role of norms that obliges individuals, more so than parties, to appear as pro-redistribution than they really

are. An alternative explanation could be that Greek voters are genuinely more skewed to the left than the average European voter, and that tendency might be also pushing ND voters slightly towards the left, while the ND remains more loyal to the stances of its party family.

One should refrain from extracting more rigid conclusions out of this pattern, however: the overall picture is more one of concordance than one of divergence. The ND is very close to its electorate, both in terms of economic policies and in terms of identity policies. How much this similarity is the result of voters adopting the party's position rather than the party adjusting to voters' preferences, we cannot tell. What seems to be the case, however, is that the ND has a relatively high dispersion, attracting voters across all four quarters, thereby confirming the party's strategy to invest in perceived competence as a vehicle that can bring votes even from ideologically distant voters.

Looking at the political issues more concretely, it is evident that the major difference between the average ND voter on the one hand and the SYRIZA one on the other, is attitudes towards inequality, freedom, and law and order. ND voters are more likely to accept closing schools as a means of preventing yet another pandemic wave even if this would increase inequality in terms of learning outcomes among children. By the same token, ND voters are more likely to accept further restrictions of movement than SYRIZA voters, even if this would generate gender inequalities, as women are more likely to be affected by such restrictions in the labor market. In this respect, Greece seems to be much different from countries such as Spain, where the right is more skeptical towards the necessity of curbing civil liberties in order to contain the virus.

Interestingly, otherwise more traditional differences between parties appear to diminish - even if SYRIZA and other left-wing party supporters are significantly more likely to accept same-sex marriage, the modal category across all parties, except for Greek Solution, is "strongly agree" a sign of how fast social change can take place once it begins to reach a tipping point.

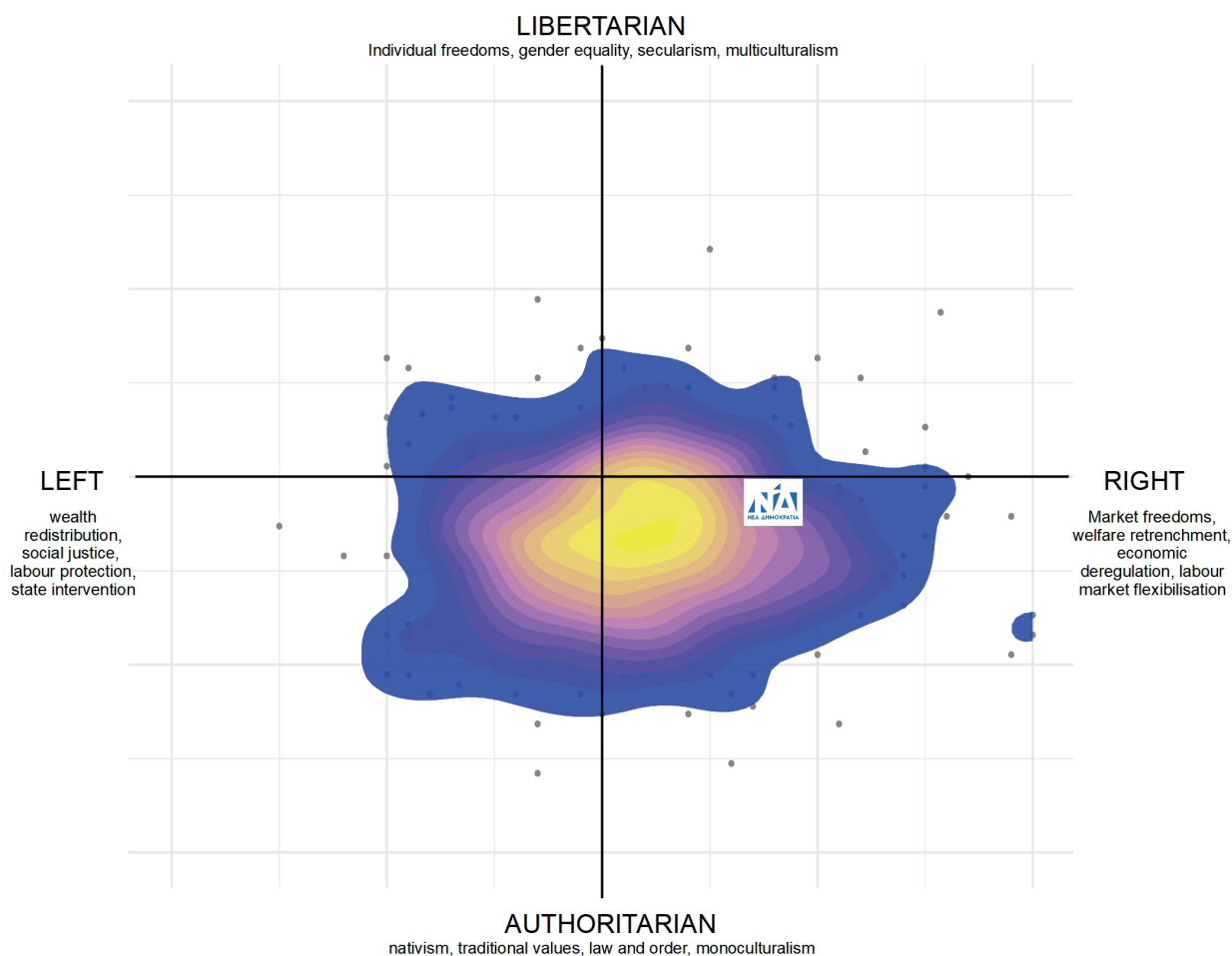
Perhaps the most significant set of differences emerges when it comes to market policies: support versus opposition toward flexible forms of work as well as openness toward market-oriented health system and education. This divergence, however, does not seem to extend into fundamentals: ND voters are also protective of worker rights and are in favour of redistribution -less so than SYRIZA voters but the mode is still on the same side. Interestingly, this is also the case with migration as well as with respect to the strengthening of competencies by the European Union. This similarity testifies the post-crisis political mood that the country has gone into - the crisis left a latent tendency towards polarization behind, even if this now manifests itself via very different issue channels. And this is perhaps the most enduring legacy of the crisis onto both the public opinion and the political elites of the country.

4.2 THE POSITION OF SYRIZA VOTERS

There is, overall, a considerable overlap between SYRIZA voters and the party position on most issues – this explains the relatively close position of the party with the majority of its electorate (see **Figure 12**). Nevertheless, there are some differences: European integration issues are particularly interesting for SYRIZA and its voters, as they reveal divisions within the electorate that are also reflected at the party level. For example, 35 per cent of SYRIZA voters disagree that EU membership is bad for Greece, while over 25 per cent are ambivalent and about 27 per cent agree with the statement. This implies that the internal divisions of SYRIZA supporters regarding Greece’s EU membership (such divisions have been observed in the past and led to SYRIZA’s leadership use of a “soft” Eurosceptic rhetoric) have not disappeared. SYRIZA voters are definitely not supportive of the EU gaining more power over the budgets of member states. When it comes to the

Figure 11

Spatial position and density of ND voters



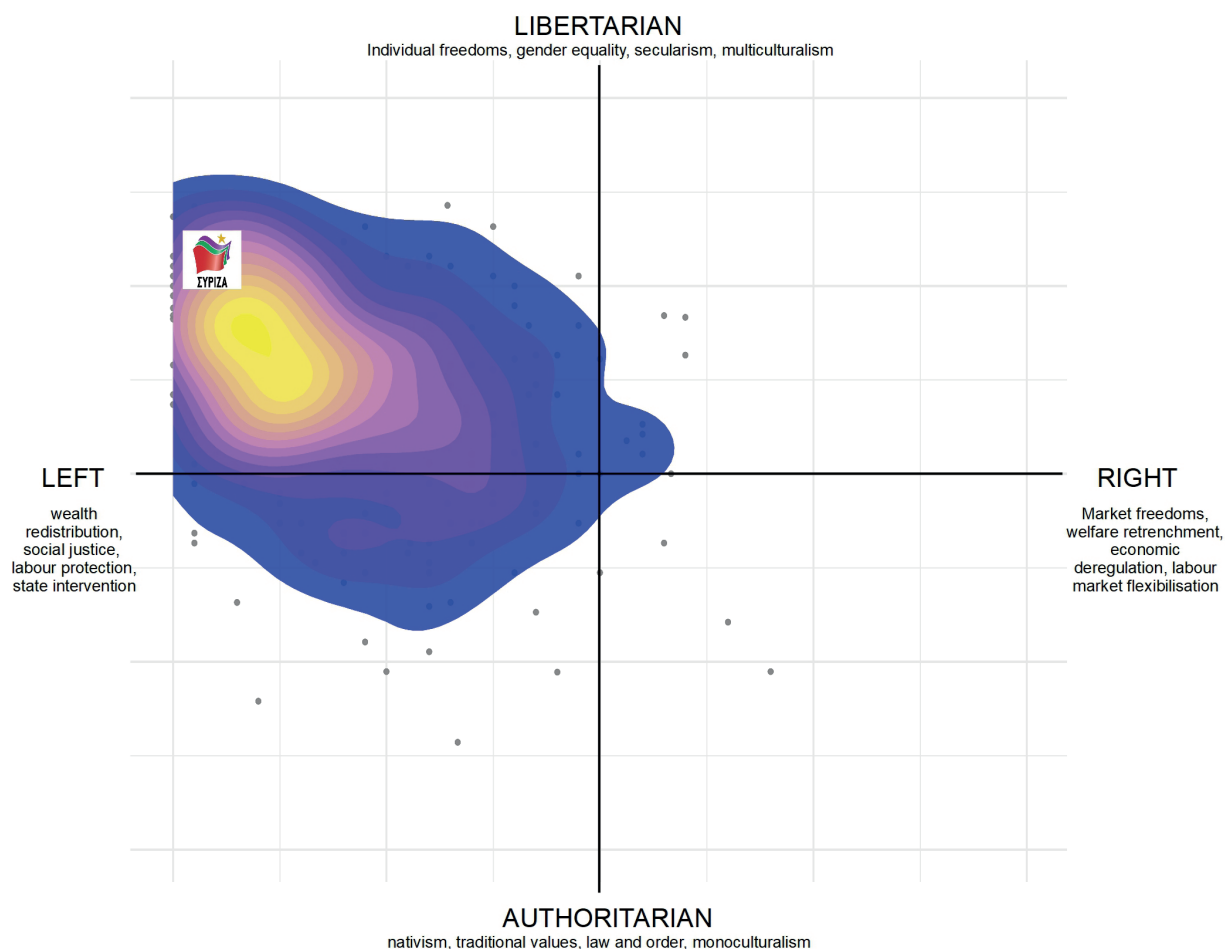
Euro, less than half of them consider it a good thing. At the same time, the majority (over 60 per cent) are against Greece leaving the single currency. Half of SYRIZA voters would like to see deepening European integration but are opposed to EU taking control over member states' taxation policies.

On sociocultural issues, voters appear to have stances in line with the party positions: those currently planning to vote for SYRIZA are, for instance, overwhelmingly in favour of more flexible citizenship: they support the right of immigrant children born in Greece to obtain Greek citizenship. Nevertheless, SYRIZA voters' support for increasing immigration is rather lukewarm. SYRIZA voters often hold different views compared to right-wing voters. They differ from ND voters when it comes to views on gender equality: contrary to ND voters, SYRIZA voters seem to acknowledge the disproportional burden placed on women by lockdown measures during the Covid19 pandemic. Another difference between

these two voter groups concerns the issue of homosexual couples' rights, which echo differences at the party level. SYRIZA voters are permissive towards the rights of religious communities other than the Christian orthodox one, while about half of them would support more asylum seekers being granted a right to stay in Greece. However, a large proportion of SYRIZA voters (about 70 per cent) appear to think that criminals should be punished more severely, thus endorsing a clear "law and order" position, typically advocated by conservative parties.

When it comes to socioeconomic issues, the voters and the party are mostly in agreement: SYRIZA sympathizers are in favour of strong governmental intervention in the economy (the degree of agreement is only surpassed by KKE voters), and favour increasing the investment in hospitals and intensive care even if this would result in raising taxes. SYRIZA voters have clearly different views when compared to ND

Figure 12

Spatial position and density of SYRIZA voters

voters on the following issues: wealth redistribution, the reduction of public sector employees, stronger financial support to unemployed workers, flexible forms of work, as well as the reduction of workers’ protection regulations. Still, both voter groups have converging positions when it comes to policies aimed at fighting global warming. Given that SYRIZA has a better reputation on ecological issues, the party should maintain these high on its agenda.

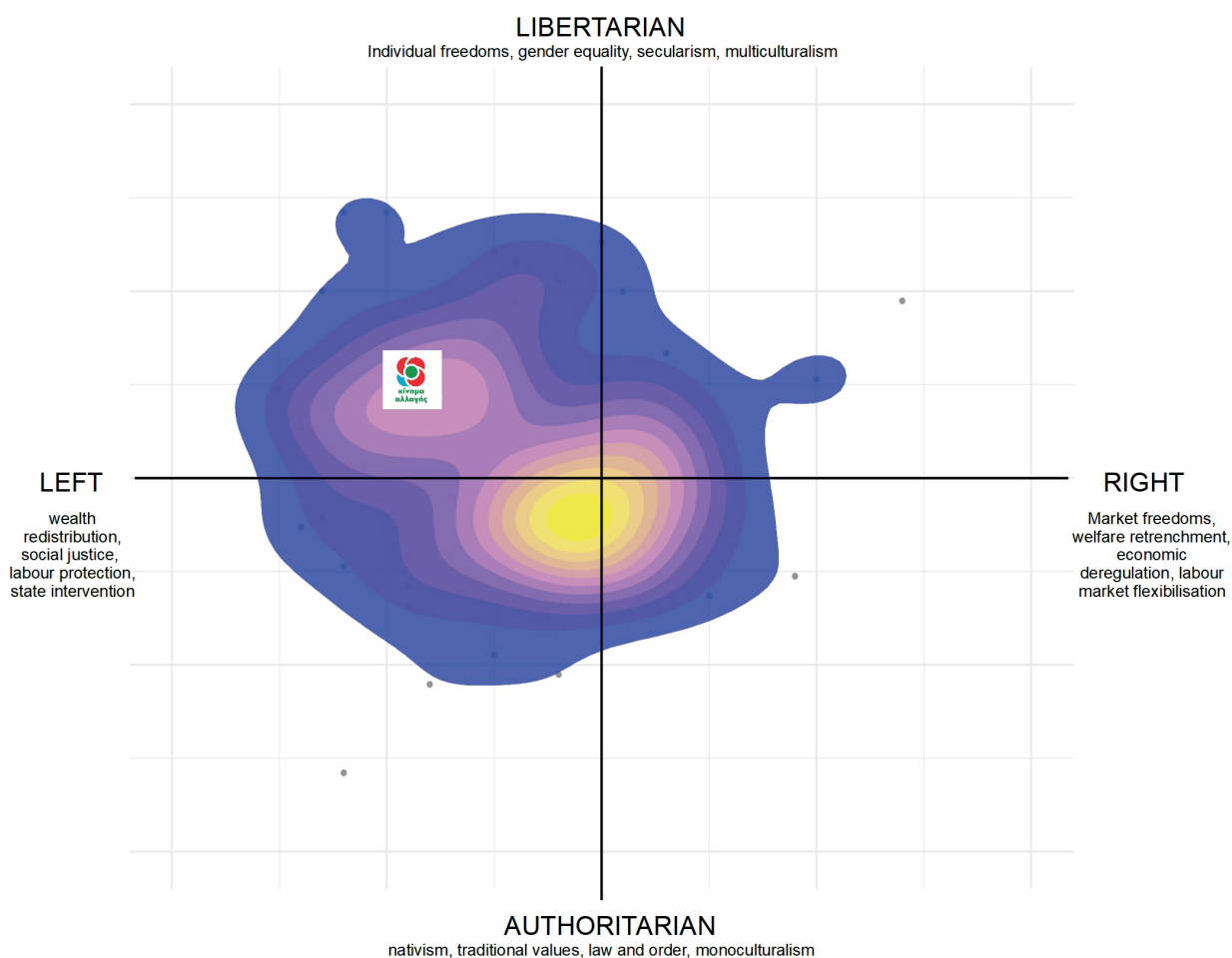
4.3 THE POSITION OF KINAL VOTERS

Among Greek political parties, KINAL appears to be the most distant one from its electorate, which suggests that the party stances differ from the preferences of its voters. While it repositioned itself on the centre-left in the aftermath of the 2019 parliamentary election, moving towards the left on economic positions and towards libertarian stances on socio-cultural issues, its electorate holds more moderate positions on both dimensions (see **Figure 13**).

First of all, KINAL voters distinguish themselves from all other voter groups because of their Europhilia. Among Greek parties and their electorates, KINAL and its voters express the highest commitment to the values and policies of European integration. When it comes to the limitation of national sovereignty in exchange for common foreign and defense policies or concession of power to the union over taxation, KINAL voters are the ones most supportive of integration. KINAL’s unequivocal pro-EU identity is in high concordance with its electorate. KINAL’s electorate fervent approval of EU membership and the single currency is nonetheless skewed in comparison to the general electorate, which despite being largely positive towards EU, expresses more nuanced positions. The party and its electorate are highly congruent on foreign policy matters, as reflected in their opinions pertaining to defense spending and extending the country’s territorial waters to twelve nautical miles.

KINAL espouses contemporary social-democratic positions on the first dimension of party competition: the economic

Figure 13
Spatial position and density of KINAL voters



left-right. Congruent with its electorate, it deems the role of the state in the economy significant, yet its electorate has adopted more right-wing stances when it comes to reducing the number of employees in the public sector. Even though both KINAL and its electorate are on the same side regarding stronger state assistance towards the unemployed, the voters are less so than the party. While the general electorate is divided on adopting more flexible forms of work to combat unemployment, KINAL voters are predominantly supportive, marking a clear demarcation line with SYRIZA voters who are largely opposed. Nevertheless, KINAL's electorate is in favor of redistributive policies and strongly opposes the reduction of workers' protection in order to fight unemployment.

Moreover, the party advocates for the state to have a salient role in education, albeit without impeding the recognition of private institutions. Even though the KINAL and SYRIZA electorates are largely suspicious towards private education, the general electorate is divided, making KINAL's mitigated position seem more responsive to the average voter than SYRIZA's and ND's official stances on the matter. KINAL's electorate is also closer to the average Greek voter when it comes to the use of taxation as an instrument for funding public health.

KINAL is highly responsive to its electorate on most socio-cultural issues. Both mark strong concordance regarding church and state separation. While KINAL voters believe that non-European immigrants should be required to accept European culture and values, they predominantly support non-Christian believers regarding the right to build places of worship, standing in the middle between ND and SYRIZA voters. KINAL's congruence with its electorate is strong on the matter, and the party seems to be closer to the average voter when it comes to religious freedoms than ND and SYRIZA. KINAL is also highly congruent with its electorate and the average Greek voter when it comes to the right of immigrants' children born in Greece to obtain Greek citizenship. Given the solidly liberal stance of KINAL (and previously PASOK) on this issue, this concordance rather testifies a social change towards a more permissive stance vis-à-vis the second generation of immigrants in Greece. This is, however, not the case with new immigrants: in harmony with the party position, KINAL voters massively support the restriction of immigration and the party holds a rather mitigated position on granting to asylum-seekers the right to stay in Greece, bringing it closer to its electorate. KINAL voters are also congruent with their party in accepting same-sex marriage, but most of them are more authoritarian than their party on issues pertaining to crime, civil liberties, law and order.

The agenda of the pandemic has further revealed important discrepancies between KINAL and its electorate in terms of civil liberties and inequalities. Even though the party has held moderate positions, latently or manifestly accepting all restrictions aimed at the spread of the virus, KINAL voters hold more extreme positions than their party regarding restrictions of demonstrations and are the most willing to sacrifice economic well-being in order to reduce the spread of the pandemic, compared to SYRIZA and ND voters. However, priming public health vis-à-vis the economy among KINAL

voters might reflect stronger individual concerns related to the age of its electorate. Furthermore, KINAL voters accept the disproportional burden placed on women by the lockdown measures, expressing a position closer to the average voter than ND and SYRIZA voters, with the former disregarding it and the latter acknowledging it. KINAL voters are less likely than their party to accept closing schools in order to fight the pandemic, if this would increase children inequalities. The only issue that KINAL and its voters are strongly congruent is the churches' obligation to abide by the rules of public gatherings, following the general pandemic guidelines.

All in all, KINAL represents its electorate well on EU-related issues and most socio-cultural ones. KINAL voters prefer more obedience, law and order than their party and are located on the right of the party on the economic agenda.

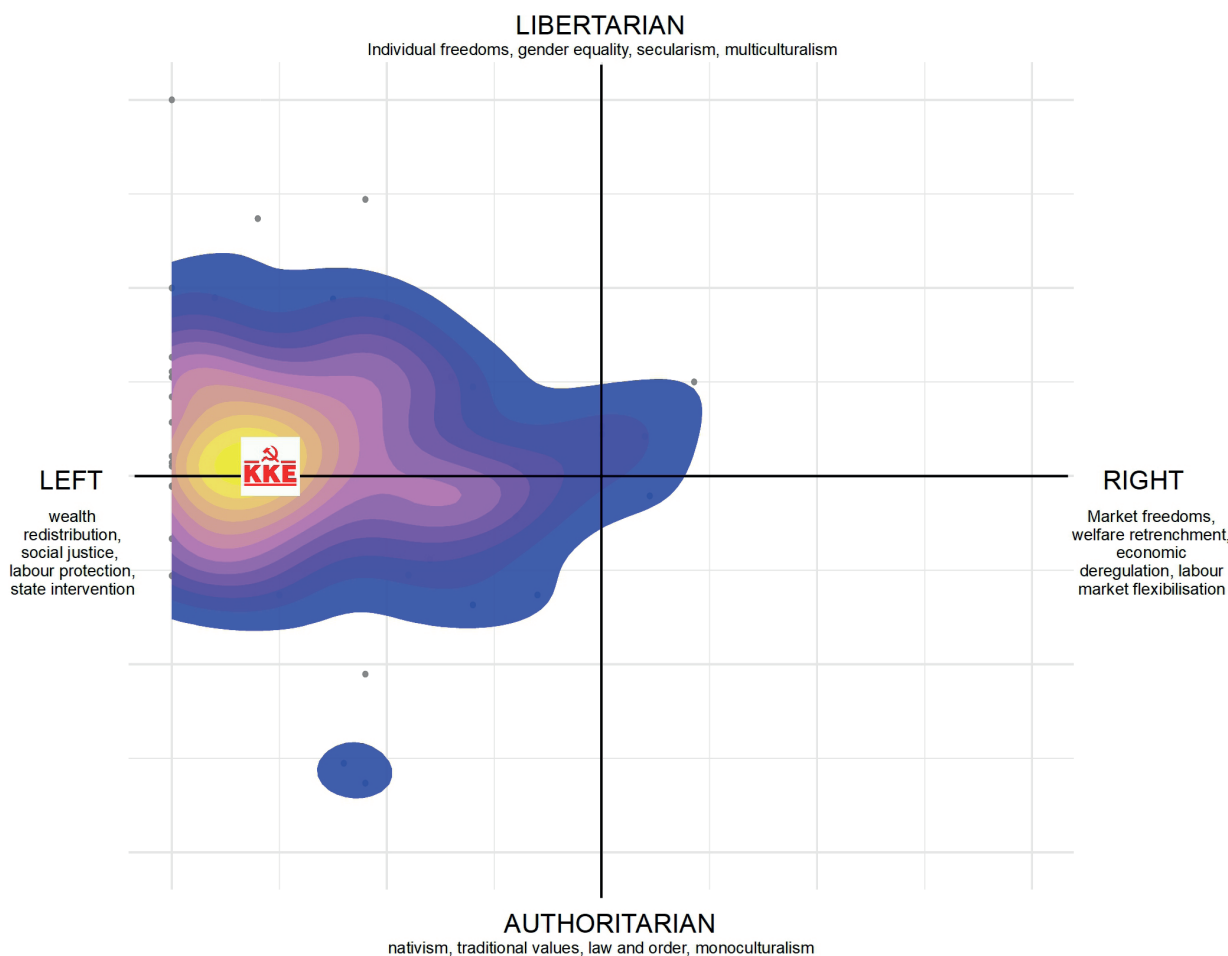
4.4 THE POSITION OF KKE VOTERS

Unsurprisingly, the highest concentration of KKE respondents is very close to the strategic position of the party. This is explicable based on the specific links that the party attempts to establish with its social base and the tendency to politicize and homogenize its electorate (see **Figure 14**). Voting for KKE means to tolerate a set of values that correspond to traditional communist ideology and support an oppositional view of party politics, according to which parties and their voters explicitly contradict themselves with other partisan identities. In this sense, KKE's strength is neither its strategic versatility, nor its eagerness to move towards the center of party competition. On the contrary, KKE benefits from its ideological rigidity that is translated into salient polarized positions, especially on the economic axis, which infuses into its electorate. Thus, it aggregates its voters as 'defenders of the faith', who consciously select a party with no office-seeking, but transformative ambitions instead.

In respect to economic issues, KKE respondents are located close to the left extreme of the economic axis. That means that they express their support towards policy views that constitute the corpus of traditional left economic thought. They stand for state interventionism in the economy, by assuming that the public sector should surpass the private sector in terms of health, education and social policy. Moreover, they stress the need for enhancing and expanding workers' rights and facilitate workers' protection especially during the pandemic. In line with their party, KKE voters think that wealth redistribution should be a legitimate collective goal for Greek society.

On the cultural axis, KKE voters express secular views, and stress the importance of certain individual rights. For instance, they support the separation of church and state, they negate special treatment of the church during the pandemic and accept religious tolerance. Concerning individual rights, they follow KKE's reservations against the restriction of the right of demonstration and reject the logic of restricting civil rights for health reasons. As for immigration issues, in general, KKE voters tend to take a pro-immigration position by accepting the notion of inclusive citizenship for second generation immi-

Figure 14

Spatial position and density of KKE voters

grants and being in favor of asylum seekers. Nevertheless, only half of them disagree with the imposition of restrictions on immigration (still a lot higher than the 18 per cent of the general population) and 63 per cent of them consider that it is necessary to culturally integrate immigrants in domestic values.

Finally, when it comes to EU issues, Euroscepticism still remains a strong identity feature for KKE, a view that appears to be shared by its voters. KKE respondents reject European integration in every possible aspect and are opposed to any attempt for accelerating or deepening this process. These Eurosceptic positions that differentiate KKE respondents from those of the other left-wing parties, does not necessarily mean they are supportive of national protectionism. Only half of KKE voters believe that Greece should leave the Euro-zone and that it is better for Greece to be in the European Union rather than out of it; these are two positions that slightly contradict with the party's view on the issue.

4.5 THE POSITION OF GREEK SOLUTION VOTERS

A comparison of the political landscape (based on official party documentation) and the heatmap (created with voter

data) reveals that both the party and its voters are on the authoritarian side of the vertical axis (see **Figure 15**). This suggests that Greek Solution (EL) voters' positions largely overlap when it comes to law and order issues, such as the ones related to the police and judiciary. Nevertheless, EL voters are more divided when the discussion turns to maintaining law and order during the pandemic: they are opposed to any civil rights restrictions. Lack of tolerance is prominent in the EL voters' worldview in which religion, family values, monoculturalism and nativism are of utmost importance. Notwithstanding this commonality, the existence of sub-categories that divide the party's electorate (such as the separation of church and state) cannot be omitted.

Topics regarding Greece's responsibilities as an EU member-state can better clarify the degree of agreement between the party and its electoral base. Specifically, Greece's defense and economic policies are unquestionably considered a matter of utmost national importance for the party and its voters.

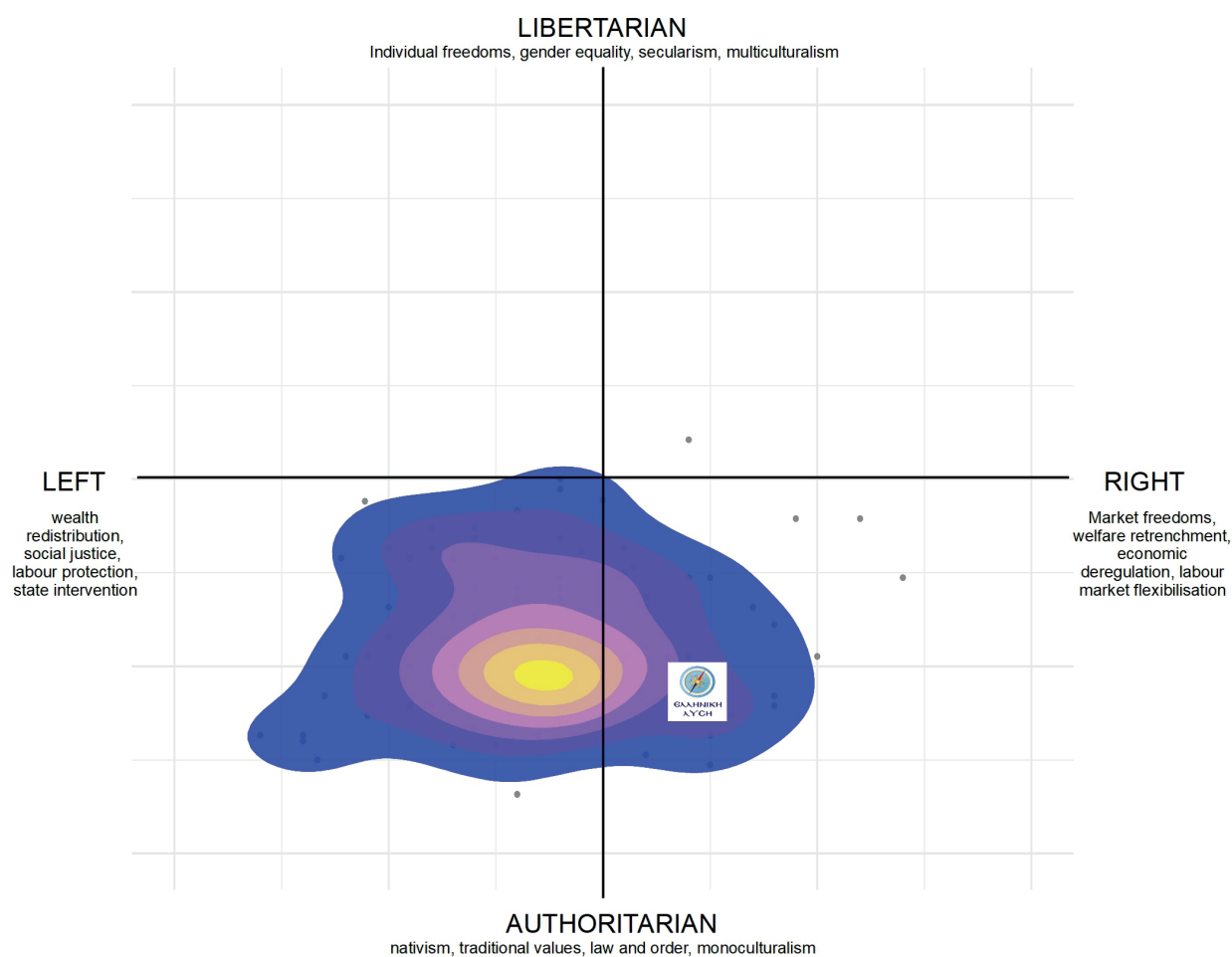
Considering the party's placement on the horizontal "left-right" axis, we can observe a differentiation between the party's positioning on the right and the voters' predominantly left positions. EL is placed on the economic right driven by

its support for a free market economy, while its electorate remains divided on the issue of governmental intervention in the economy. Next to this, the economic crisis – combined with the pandemic – increased public support for welfare policies, the strengthening of labor rights and unemployment benefits. The party opposed to all of the above and is promoting a more flexible labor market instead. EL voters are concentrated on the center-left of the “left-authoritarian” quadrant: a position different from the one of their party.

economic terms. Reshaping its policies in accordance with its voters’ opinions could provide EL with an opportunity to crystallize its cultural and economic dimensions. Nevertheless, the party’s direction remains to be seen, given the numerous political opportunities stemming from the ongoing crisis.

In conclusion, voters reflect the party’s authoritarian positions in the cultural dimension. This overlap of opinions between the party and its voters may be explained following the political opportunities that benefitted the party’s rise. Popular Orthodox Rally’s (LAOS’) political disappearance and Golden Dawn’s electoral decline left a part of Greek voters politically homeless. EL housed those voters, despite not making some of its positions clear. While EL voters are in agreement with the party’s cultural stances, they differ in

Figure 15

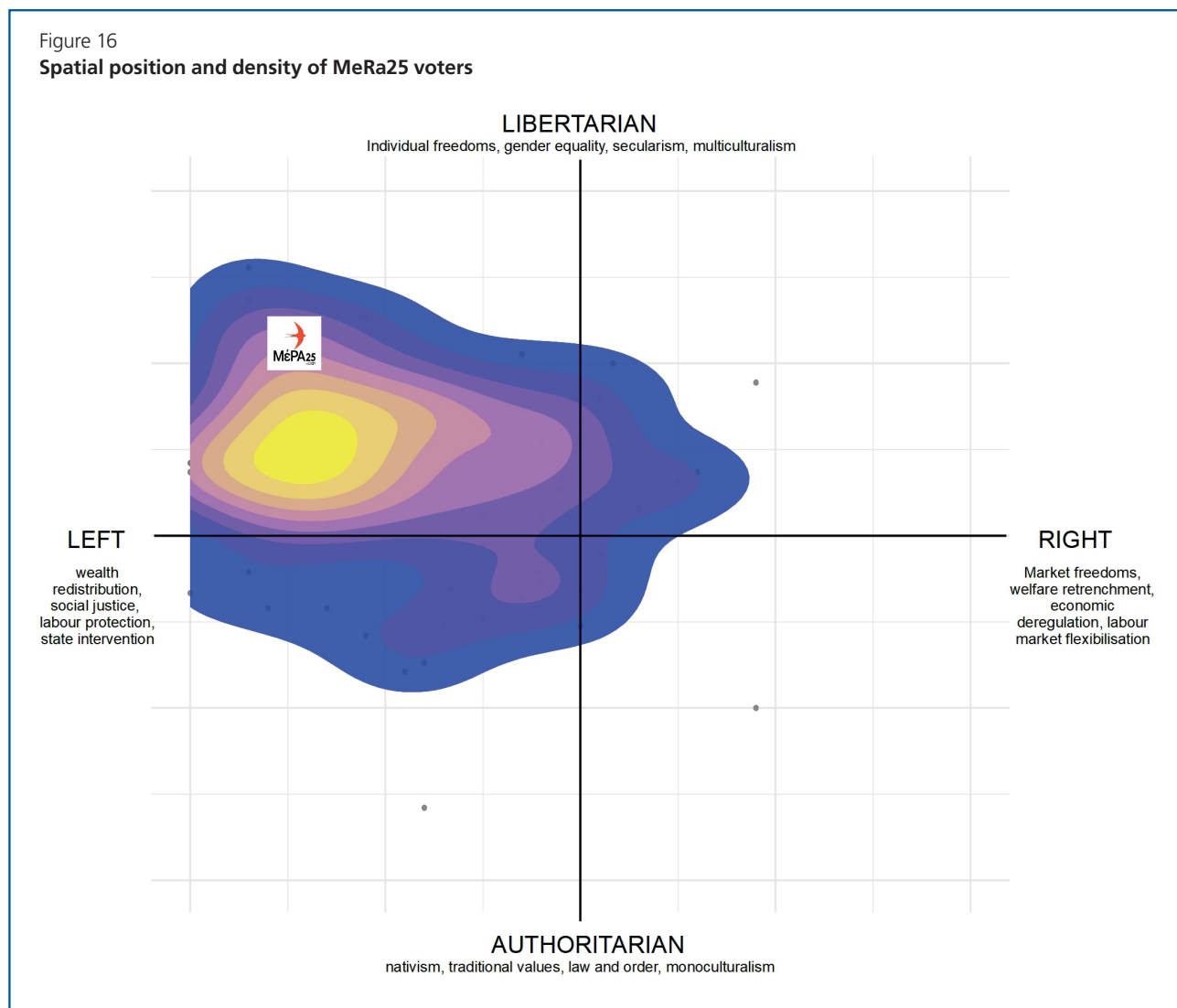
Spatial position and density of Greek Solution voters

4.6 THE POSITION OF MERA25 VOTERS

As shown in **Figure 16**, the positions of the party are more radical left and progressive compared to its voters. The tendency towards ‘extremism’ from the parties themselves, compared to the electorate is a common pattern for all parties in our study, but it is also a common finding in the comparative study of political parties across the world. More specifically, when it comes to the density of MeRa25 voters along the two main dimensions of party competition, they are clearly concentrated on the same position as the party on the economic dimension. There are certain items, mainly in the sociocultural axis, but also in the economic one that contribute to this pattern. The items with the highest levels of congruence are the support for same sex marriages, the approval of the separation between the state from the church, and the opposition to the creation of private educational institutions, among others. Overall, our data confirm that the bulk of MeRA25 voters profess economically left-wing and cultural-libertarian stances. When it comes to the standard economic policy preferences of the party, there is a clear match with the preferences of the supporters. Conversely, the data suggests that there is a certain mismatch between the positions of the party and its

electorate when it comes to items about cultural issues and the pandemic. More specifically, its voters are more ambivalent about the measures to reduce the spread of Covid. MeRA25 voters are split this statement, with roughly 40 % who agree and 40% who disagree.

The other main ‘source’ of incongruence between the party discourse and its supporters regards issues of law and order, with the voters adopting generally less libertarian positions than the party. We might conclude that these are the issues that produce a certain (low) asymmetry between the positions of the party and its voters; the majority (62 %) of potential MeRA25 voters declare that “Criminals should be punished more severely”, while the statement “The police has to react more strictly to the destruction of public property” produces even more ambivalent stances: half of their voters disagree or strongly disagree, while the rest adopt either neutral positions or are in favour. Another set of items that contributes to difference between the voters and the party concerns immigration. With regard to the statement “Immigration into Greece should be made more restrictive”, MeRA25 voters are split: 46% disagree, while 34% agree. Finally, EU-related issues are another bone of contention among MeRA25 voters.



The respondents who declared that they intend to vote for the party of Yanis Varoufakis appear to be divided on the issue of the Euro, with about half approving of the common currency.

Overall, we might conclude that the supporters of MeRA25 tend to adopt stances which are mostly in line with the programmatic commitments of the party, especially when it comes to the flagship issues of the party. On the other hand, on issues of lower salience for the party (with the exception of the Euro), variation tends to be higher. Despite the short life of the new leftist party, it seems to attract voters with matching ideological orientations and preferences, at least on issues that the party emphasizes in its communication.

4.7 THE POSITION OF VOTERS IN GREECE: AN OVERVIEW OF THE CONCLUSIONS

The Greek political system can be graphically represented by at least two dimensions: the left-right economic dimension and the authoritarian-libertarian cultural dimension. When voters and parties are positioned on this two-dimensional system, three elements, that can be perceived as Greek particularities, become apparent.

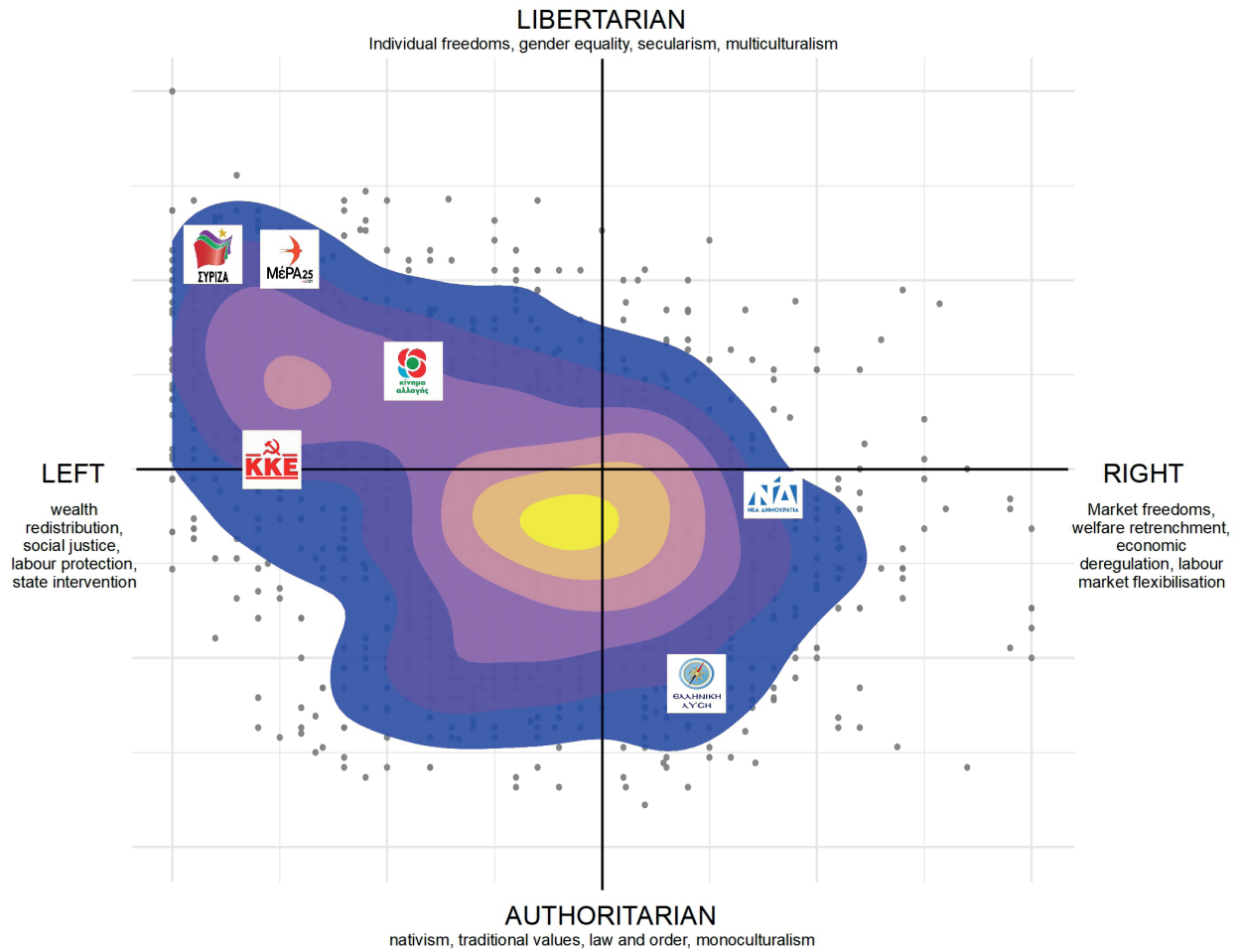
First of all, this two-dimensional system appears to work perfectly for Greek voters - they are clearly dispersed across the four quartiles constructed by the two dimensions, even though there is a higher concentration of voters on the left-hand side of the political landscape. Parties, however, are clearly located only in the left-libertarian and the right-authoritarian quartiles, leaving the two other quartiles empty. This puts pressure on the system to collapse these two dimensions into a single one. The overarching left-right dimension has a left-libertarian extreme, where SYRIZA, MeRa25, and KINAL are located and a right-authoritarian extreme where, New Democracy and Greek Solution are located. The only party that escapes this pattern and adopts a left-authoritarian position is KKE.

Secondly, looking at the main heatmap that contains all voters (**Figure 17**), the epicentre with the highest concentration of Greek voters that lies slightly off the centre of the left-libertarian / right-authoritarian axis becomes apparent. Theoretically, this is the most lucrative position that a political party can adopt, as it would offer representation to the majority of Greek voters on the two most relevant dimensions. Surprisingly, no political party lies in that area. On the contrary, all political parties hold much more radical positions than their constituents. Greek voters will have a difficult time finding the best match for their rather moderate preferences. This outcome suggests that the directional theory of voting has a place in Greece: people vote for a party in order to push the system towards a direction, rather than because they truly identify with its positions.

Thirdly, there are two categories of voters who are not fully represented by the Greek party system in terms of their positions on the abovementioned dimensions – respondents positioned in the right libertarian quadrant, as well as those in

the left authoritarian quadrant. The situation is especially difficult for left, authoritarian leaning centrist voters, who appear to be a majority in the Greek system. This problem is likely solved pragmatically by each individual voter by means of choosing the dimension which they prefer to be represented on. Such voters can either vote for a left-libertarian party (SYRIZA, KINAL, MeRa25) if they consider the economic left-right dimension to be more important, or by a right-authoritarian party (ND, Greek Solution) if they consider authoritarian-libertarian cultural issues to be more important. This choice depends on the salience of the economic and cultural dimension at the time of election and the personal preferences of individual voters. However, having to make this choice increases the feeling of inadequate representation and can produce tensions and alienation with the system and political parties in particular. Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out that voters located towards the centre of the political landscape tend to adopt a variety of political stances that might often be ideologically conflicting. The Greek system would benefit from more political parties which would improve the quality of representation.

Figure 17
Spatial position and density of Greek Voters



5

IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION

The economic crisis that hit Greece led to a political one that altered the structure of the Greek party system. A new era for Greek politics started back in 2012 with coalition governments throughout the period of the crisis. Under these circumstances party competition reflected significant changes in the Greek political landscape. However, the Greek party system has seemingly entered into a new period of stabilization after the parliamentary elections of 2019. Its main feature is a familiar two-party structure with ND and SYRIZA in place of PASOK. The main aim of the project under the auspices of FES office in Athens was to try to investigate the orientations of the Greek political parties on the new dimensional space. Specifically, the goal is to locate the positions of parties and voters on various economic, cultural and political issues as well as their EU stances and issues related to the pandemic after the turbulent years of the economic crisis (but during the ongoing corona-virus crisis). Overall, as analyzed in this publication the two-dimensional structure of the ideological space in the post-memorandum period is confirmed. The competition of the Greek parties in this period was on a basis of different priorities; the centre-left and leftist parties tried to emphasize more socio-cultural issues, whereas the incumbent party of ND focused more on issues related to law and order and foreign-policy ones (Turkey-related issues). Furthermore, we observe a new confrontation that takes place along the vertical axis, when the latter corresponds to preferences for and against European integration. This results in a division within the “right” camp, between a cosmopolitan right and a nationalistic right. Another finding is that there the contraposition between Euroscepticism and nativism mainly due to the rhetoric adopted by the communist party of Greece.

The comparison with voters’ preferences reveal that there are some higher levels of party-voter congruence among the parties at the center-left and extreme left of the ideological axis. Moreover, EU related issues are more salient among Greek voters compared to the pre-crisis period, reflected in increased levels of politicization and polarization on EU-related issues. Furthermore, as analyzed in detail in the previous section, there is an overall tendency of the Greek electorate to adopt centrist positions on a variety of issues, but there seems to be lack of political supply as there is no Greek party that clearly occupies that area.

In conclusion, some of our indicators perhaps point to diminished quality of political representation in Greece since one can clearly observe a sizeable gap between citizens’ preference and party positions. However, these findings should be interpreted with some caution as more diachronic data could allow us to present more reliable inferences about the transformation of Greek political space. Hopefully, our work can serve as the first step towards more systematic research in Greece on the dimensionality of the ideological space over time.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dinas Elias holds the Swiss Chair in Federalism, Democracy and International Governance (joint SPS/RSC chair). Before this, he was Associate Professor in Comparative Politics at Oxford, where he was also a Tutorial Fellow at Brasenose College. Elias holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the European University Institute (2010) and his research focuses on ways to ameliorate outgroup prejudice, with a specific look into ethnic and religious minorities. He has published in several major political science journals

Eleftheriou Costas is Assistant Professor of Political and Historical Sociology at the Democritus University of Thrace. He is the coordinator of the political analysis unit at the ENA Institute of Alternative Policies. He has taught previously at the Universities of Athens and Crete and the Hellenic Open University. His research interests include party theory, Greek party politics, left parties in Europe, employers' associations and political power

Katsanidou Alexia is the scientific director of the department Survey Data Curation at GESIS- Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences and Professor of Empirical Social Research at the University of Cologne. She is a comparative political scientist holding an M.A. in Comparative Democratization (2003) and a Ph.D. in Politics (2008) from the Government Department at Essex University, UK. Her research focuses on the impact of long term societal transformations and short term crises on political attitudes and electoral behaviour in Europe

Kordas George is a PhD student at the Department of Political Science and History, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences. In his PhD project, he investigates how the European Parliament members' discourse affects European values during the migration and refugee crisis in Southeastern Europe. His research interests focus on the study of the parliamentary discourse of far-right parties, as well as the comparative study of the far-right subcultures in Southeastern Europe. He has published in various journals and in collective volumes

Krouwel André (Associate professor at VU University Amsterdam) teaches comparative political science and communication at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and is the founder of Kieskompas (Election Compass) – a developer of online Voting Advice Applications, with which data is collected on party positions and voter opinions. Krouwel's research focuses on public opinion and politically relevant sentiments, voting behaviour, political parties and social movements. Recent research has also resulted in publications on conspiracy belief, opinions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the vote determinants for European fringe parties and Euroscepticism.

Kutiyski Yordan (Senior researcher at Kieskompas (Election Comp[ass]) is an MSc graduate of political science from the VU University Amsterdam and holds a MA degree in Latin American studies from the Centre of Latin American Research and Documentation (CEDLA) at the University of Amsterdam. He is a quantitative researcher at Kieskompas. His research interests include voting behaviour, European and Latin American politics.

Lefkofridi Zoe is professor of political science with focus on gender, diversity and equality at the University of Salzburg. She is the coordinator of Push*Back*Lash, a multi-method, transdisciplinary project on feminism and democracy funded by the Horizon Europe framework. She is the chief editor of specialty section 'Political Participation' of the new gold open access journal *Frontiers in Political Science* and co-editor of the series 'Politics and Governance in the Smaller European Democracies', *Nomos* publications. Her research and teaching focus on democracy, representation and (in-) equality; her work appears in *European Union Politics*, *Politics & Gender*, and *West European Politics*, among others

Rori Lamprini is Assistant Professor at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. She previously was Lecturer in Politics at the University of Exeter, Jean Monnet Fellow at the EUI, Leventis Fellow at the University of Oxford, and a Marie Curie Fellow at Bournemouth University. Her thesis (Sorbonne University of Paris) compared socialist parties' change via the professionalisation of political communication. She is currently researching political violence, the far right and the far left in Europe, the role of emotions in politics.

Teperoglou Eftichia is Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Sciences, Aristotle University Thessaloniki. She worked at the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research, Germany, and at the Center for Research and Studies in Sociology, Portugal. Her main research interests are in the fields of political and electoral behaviour with a focus on European elections, comparative politics and public opinion. Being one of the founders of the Hellenic National Election Study, she has published in international scholarly journals and in edited volumes.

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Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
Athens Office
Neofytou Vamva 4 | 10674 Athens | Greece

Responsible:
Arne Schildberg | Director
Phone: +30 210 72 44 670
<https://athens.fes.de>

Email:
info.athens@fes.de

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